UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGEND OF THOMAS BECKET

PAUL ALONZO BROWN

A THESIS
IN ENGLISH
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILADELPHIA
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To the Memory

of

My Father

R. UNIV.
BIBLIOTHEEK
LEIDEN

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION ........................................ 7

I

The Historical versus the Legendary Becket ........................ 14

II

The Legend of the Saracen Princess—A Comparison of Versions ........ 28

III

The Legend of the Saracen Princess—Sources and Analogues .......... 51

IV

Legends of the Life of Becket .................................. 75

V

Legends of the Martyrdom ...................................... 108

VI

Legends of the Murderers ...................................... 138

VII

Legends of St. Thomas ......................................... 154

VIII

Legends of St. Thomas (Continued) ............................. 184

IX

Local Traditions .............................................. 201

X

Political Prophecies Attributed to Becket ........................ 225

XI

Modern Legends ................................................ 238

CONCLUSION .................................................... 257

## APPENDICES

A

The Legend of the Saracen Princess as Given in Bodleian MS. 14716 of the *South English Legendary* . . . . . . . . 262

B

The Legend of the Saracen Princess as given in John Grandison's Life of St. Thomas . . . . . . . . 269

C

The Legend of the Saracen Princess as given in the Anonymous English Translation of the *Legenda Aurea* . . . . . . . . 271

D

List of Parallels to the Legend of the Saracen Princess and Analysis of Motives . . . . . . . . 274

E

Bibliography . . . . . . . . 278

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# INTRODUCTION

There are three Beckets: the Becket of History, the Becket of Legend, and the Becket of Literature. That these figures sometimes overlap does not detract from the general truth of the statement. In some respects the legendary and the literary figures are more interesting than the historical one, for they show the popular and sometimes artistic imagination working through long periods of time upon a nucleus of fact, and frequently resolving the character into an ideal.

It is not generally known that about Thomas Becket, as about every historical personage presenting popular appeal, there developed a gradually accumulating body of legend—or, if this fact is recognized, there is no adequate apprehension of how great or how full of interest and significance this body of legend is. In England during the Middle Ages, the greatest subjects for myth-making[1] were King Arthur, Thomas Becket, Richard the Lionhearted, and Robin Hood. Of these characters, all of whom became national heroes, Becket was certainly not the least. There were two roads to distinction during the Middle Ages: war and the church, and Becket followed both paths to greatness; in the days of his chancellorship he was a soldier who brought much honor to his king and to himself, and in the rôle of archbishop he engaged in a struggle for the church which terminated in canonization and world-wide fame.

Although innumerable books and papers have been written about Thomas Becket, apparently there is nothing which traces the development of the legend concerning him, or which treats his life and legend as a theme in literature.[2] This two-fold purpose has been the object of a study in which the present writer has for some time been engaged. The results of the first part of the investigation, dealing with the growth of the legendary figure, are here presented; the second part of the work, a comparative study of the various treatments in the literature of the Middle Ages and of modern times, remains to be published. The purpose of the present dissertation, then, is to place side by side the figure of Becket as he was in actuality and that which he became in popular myth, to study the traditions concerning him, and to trace the growth of the legend of Becket from its beginnings in unconscious magnification of a hero to its climax in a romantic ideal.

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[1] See Professor Schelling's paper on myth making in *Shakespeare and "Demi-Science"* (Philadelphia, 1927).

[2] In 1909 Felix Jaeger published a dissertation entitled, *Thomas à Becket in Saga und Dichtung, mit besonderer Berüchsichtigung des neuren englischen Dramas* (Breslau). He had, it seems, planned also to treat Becket in Middle English and Old French poetry, but did not carry out his intention.

The facts about Becket have already been rather thoroughly collected as a result of the renaissance of interest in the great archbishop during the last century. It remains to assemble and organize that which the historian discards or upon which he looks askance. In this study legend may be sought in works purporting to be historical, in tradition, and in literature. Material concerning Becket may be found in the following sources, listed in the order of their value from the historical point of view:[3]

(1) *Letters written by, to, or about Becket.*[4] These letters cover practically his whole life, and in spite of a pedantic style, often give one a real insight into the true Becket. The worship of Becket's friends may be balanced by the hatred of his enemies and a fairly clear idea gained of the personality about which so much controversy centered.

(2) *Lives of Becket written shortly after his death by people who were eye witnesses to most of the events of which they speak.* Perhaps the place of chief honor belongs to the biography of William Fitzstephen, dated by Magnusson about 1171–72 and by M. Walberg, 1173–74. Fitzstephen was closely associated with Becket during the time the latter was archbishop and perhaps

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[3] The following summary of authorities for the life of Becket is based upon the introductions to the first four volumes of *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, Rolls Series, No. 67, ed. James Craigie Robertson; the introduction to the second volume of *Thomas Saga Erkibyskups*, Rolls Series, No. 65, ed. M. Eirikr Magnusson; L. B. Radford, *Thomas of London before his Consecration* (Cambridge, 1894), Appendix, "The Biographers of Thomas"; E. Walberg, *La Vie de Saint Thomas le Martyr par Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence* (Lund, 1922), Introduction: Chapter II, and his "Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence et la 'legende de Becket'," in *Melanges de Philologie offerts à M. Johan Vising*, (Paris, 1925); and W. H. Hutton, *Thomas Becket* (Cambridge, 1926), Chapter XIV.

[4] The correspondence of Becket has been collected in the last three volumes of the *Materials.*

also when he was chancellor. "Every descriptive touch of the archbishop shows a knowledge as intimate as the power of observation is exact."[5] John of Salisbury's acquaintance with Thomas began earlier than that of any other biographer, but his contribution to our knowledge of Becket is slight. His account is brief and disappointing in view of his opportunity to know the facts. His biography is dated by M. Walberg between 1173 and 1176. Herbert of Bosham also had an excellent opportunity for knowing his subject. Radford thinks that he was in the service of the chancellor; it is certain that he was present at the Councils of Tours, Clarendon, and Northampton; and he may have been with the archbishop during his exile. At the time of the murder he was absent on a mission to the Continent. His biography, a tedious and prolonged account, was begun in 1184, according to his own statement, and finished before 1187; perhaps, as M. Walberg thinks, in 1186. Benedict of Peterborough, perhaps the earliest writer of the group, whose *Passio* exists in some fragments preserved in the Quadrilogus, was with Thomas on the day of his death, though not actually present at the martyrdom. Benedict's principal contribution was the first volume of Miracles, which Magnusson dates 1171–72 and M. Walberg 1173–74.

(3) *Other lives written shortly after the murder.* Of the lives in this group that of Grim claims first place, for Edward Grim, though a stranger and a secular clerk from Cambridge, was the only one of the biographers who witnessed the martyrdom. Most of his testimony to the life of Thomas is given at second hand; he seems even to prefer the information derived from Thomas' intimate acquaintances to his own immediate knowledge of the facts. His life was dated by Magnusson from internal evidence between 1174 and 1177, but M. Walberg believes that it existed "dans sa forme primitive" about 1171–1172.[6] Auctor Anonymus I was identified by Dr. Giles as Roger of Pontigny, on evidence which did not seem sufficient to Canon Robertson, though it has been accepted by M. Walberg. The author says in

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[5] W. H. Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 295.
[6] Edition of Guernes, pp. xxxv–xxxvi.

his preface that he ministered to the archbishop in his exile and that he was ordained by him to the priesthood. He deplores the fact that no satisfactory life of Thomas had as yet appeared, and gives it as his aim, to supply a biography in which "nothing should find a place beyond what he himself had seen and heard or ascertained from trustworthy evidence of those who had been present on different occasions."[7] William of Canterbury became a monk at Christ Church during Becket's exile and was ordained deacon by him on the latter's return. His acquaintance with the archbishop was consequently brief, and at the time of the martyrdom he saved himself by flight. He wrote two works, one a collection of *Miracles* begun in 1172, and the other a life of Thomas, which is dated by M. Walberg 1173–4. Guernes of Pont Sainte Maxence[8] is the author of the life which has the distinction of being the most significant from a literary point of view and also one of the most sane. His memory of Becket went back to the time when the latter was chancellor and leader of the English troops, he had particular knowledge of the exile, and he seems to have spared no pains to make his biography as accurate as possible. In his search for information he visited Canterbury, and consulted, among others, the sisters of Thomas and the prior and monks of Christ Church. Alan of Tewkesbury was a contemporary but not an eye-witness. In addition to his life of Thomas, which covers the period from January, 1164 to January, 1169, and which was written, according to M. Walberg, about 1176–1179, he published an edition of 529 letters. The work of Anonymus II seems to be that of a man not personally connected with the events with which he deals. Walberg dates his work 1172–1173.

(4) *Later lives which retell the story purely from secondary sources and are often influenced by tradition.* The Icelandic *Thomas Saga Erkibyskups* must be given first place here. Neither the date nor the authorship of this picturesque work has been established; it is a composite, and may represent, according to Magnusson, a popularization and enlargement of the saga

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[7] Radford, *op. cit.*, p. 251, quoted from Auct. Anon. I, IV. 2.

[8] Ed. E. Walberg (London and Paris, 1922).

of Berg Gunnsteinsson, to whom two references are known, one in 1201 and the other in 1213. In its present form it includes the translation of St. Thomas in 1220. The main sources seem to have been the life by Benedict and a lost life by Robert of Cricklade. There is also a life of Becket by Grandison, Bishop of Exeter from 1327 until his death in 1369.[9]

(5) *Collections of lives.* It was only a short time until an attempt was made to collect some of these lives. The Gospels were taken as a model, and a Quadrilogus, or harmony of four lives of the saint, was written about 1198–1199 by a monk of Evesham, apparently named Elias. It was drawn from the writings of John of Salisbury, Alan of Tewkesbury, William of Canterbury, and Herbert of Bosham, with the addition of Benedict of Peterborough's *Passio* where John of Salisbury's narrative ceases. This *Early Quadrilogus* was edited by Christian Wolf (Lupus) and published in 1682. It was recast by Roger of Croyland and finished about 1212–13, but was never printed in the revised form. A *Later Quadrilogus*[10] inserts passages from two biographers not used in the earlier compilation, Edward Grim and William Fitzstephen. It was printed in Paris in 1495.

(6) *Medieval chronicles.*[11] Gervase of Canterbury gives Becket a prominent place in his *Chronicon*, *Gesta Regum*, and *Actus Pontificum*.[12] Though dealing with his own age in treating the subject of Becket, he follows his authorities, the biographers, closely. In the twelfth century belong also the chronicles of Ralph de Diceto, Roger de Hoveden, Giraldus Cambrensis, the chronicle ascribed to Benedict, and the *Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris.[13] In the next century may be mentioned the

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[9] Grandison's life has not been printed; there are copies in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MSS. 467, 464, 275, and 177, and one in the Bodleian Library, MS. 493. See Appendix B for an extract from Grandison's work.

[10] Sometimes called the First Quadrilogus from the fact that it was the first to be printed. As there has been no uniformity in the use of the terms "First Quadrilogus" and "Second Quadrilogus," I have sought to avoid confusion by following E. A. Abbott, *St. Thomas of Canterbury, His Death and Miracles* (London, 1898), I, 17, 18, in calling the works Early and Late Quadrilogus.

[11] See *Materials*, Vol. IV, for extracts pertaining to Becket from some of the chronicles (those mentioned in this paragraph are not included).

[12] *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. William Stubbs, Rolls Series (London, 1880).

[13] All of these chronicles are published in the Rolls Series.

chronicle of John Brompton,[14] which extends from 588 to 1198. Berington applies to him the adjective "fabling," and says that he is a transcriber of Hoveden in all that is important. The popular *Flores Historiarum*[15] of the same century was largely derived from the *Chronica Majora.* In the fourteenth century, the *Polychronicon* passed through many editions. There were also chronicles in English and French treating Becket; for example, the chronicle attributed to Robert of Gloucester[16] and the *Polistoire,*[17] a manuscript history of Canterbury Cathedral.

(7) *Medieval legendaries.* Of especial importance are *The South English Legendary,*[18] probably composed in the thirteenth century;[19] the various versions of the *Legenda Aurea,* beginning with the original compilation of Jacobus de Voragine,[20] written about 1260 and culminating in Caxton's English version of 1483;[21] and the *Nova Legenda Anglie,*[22] printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1516.

(8) *Modern lives of the saints.* Hagiography flourished during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Some of the most important of these works are the *Lives of the English Saints* by Nicolas Roscarrock,[23] Henry Wharton's *Anglia Sacra* (1691), Bishop Richard Challoner's *Britannia Sancta,* commended by Prof. Gerould as "a work of solid and painstaking scholarship,"[24] and Alban Butler's monumental collection, *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints* (1756–59).

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[14] In Roger Twysden, *Scriptores Decem.*

[15] *Roger of Wendover's Flowers of History,* trans. J. A. Giles (London, 1849).

[16] *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester,* ed. W. A. Wright (London, 1887).

[17] Harleian MS. 636. Some extracts are given in Dean Stanley's *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* (second American from the eleventh London edition), and A. J. Mason, *What became of the Bones of St. Thomas?* (Cambridge, 1920).

[18] *Die M. E. Thomas Beket-legende des Gloucesterlegendars,* ed. H. Thiemke, Palaestra, CXXXI (Berlin, 1919).

[19] The oldest manuscript, Laud 108, is dated by Thiemke 1280–90..

[20] Ed. Dr. Theodor Graesse (Editio secunda, Lipsiae, 1840).

[21] Ed. F. S. Ellis, Temple Classics (London, 1900).

[22] Ed. Carl Horstmann (Oxford, 1901).

[23] MS. Cambridge Univ. Libr. Add. 3041.

[24] G. H. Gerould, *Saints' Legends* (New York, 1916), p. 336.

(9) *Modern histories and biographies generally scientific in attitude*, such as the biographies of Radford and Hutton.[25]

(10) *Modern histories and biographies generally unscientific in attitude*, such as Thierry's *Norman Conquest*[26] and Mgr. Demimuid, *St. Thomas Becket.*[27]

(11) *Literary treatments which make no pretention to historical accuracy*, such as Tennyson's *Becket*, Aubrey de Vere's play, *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, and Konrad Ferdinand Meyer's *Der Heilige.*

(12) *Popular tradition.*

As sources become less important from the historical point of view, they become more valuable from that of legend. Even in the correspondence violent partisanship may be found, and also that tendency toward idealization on the part of Becket's friends which provided favorable soil for the growth of legend, and which makes it necessary for the historian to balance testimony against testimony in order to avoid one-sided conclusions. The lives of Becket written by eye-witnesses might seem at first thought to furnish acceptable evidence, but they too are colored by the spirit of partisanship, and by the unscientific and unquestioning attitude which characterized the Middle Ages. It is possible, then, that in some pardonable bit of exaggeration, some overdrawing of the picture of the martyred hero, there may be found the germ of a legend that developed fully a few centuries later. The growth of legend will obviously be fostered by the telling of the story of Becket from secondary sources, and more and more tradition will creep into the narratives as the story is re-told. The literary treatments are interesting for the present purpose because they often embody legendary material and sometimes clothe it with a new beauty.

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[25] *Op. cit.*

[26] A. Thierry, *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans,* translated from the seventh Paris edition by William Hazlitt (London, 1856).

[27] Paris, 1856.

# I

## THE HISTORICAL VERSUS THE LEGENDARY BECKET

"Brave legends both!
They mean that Becket's great. Whate'er hath greatness
Kindles some legend round its onward way
Through the gross ether of the popular mind.
Becket's a man!"
(Aubrey de Vere, *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, Act I, Scene I.)

In view of the many biographies of Thomas Becket that have appeared within the last fifty years,[1] it will be necessary here only to summarize the main events of his life.

Thomas[2] was born in Cheapside, London,[3] in a house which has now given place to Mercers' Chapel, on the twenty-first of December, probably in 1118.[4] His parents were Norman; his father, Gilbert, was born near Thierceville[5] and lived later in

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[1] The most scholarly biography is probably L. B. Radford's *Thomas of London before his Consecration* (Cambridge, 1894), though, as the title suggests, it covers only the early portion of his career. W. H. Hutton's *Thomas Becket* (Cambridge, 1926) is one of the sanest of modern biographies. The article by Kate Norgate in *The Dictionary of National Biography* is an excellent summary of Becket's life.

[2] Many names have been applied to him: Thomas of London, Thomas the archdeacon, Thomas the chancellor, Thomas the archbishop, St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Thomas of Acon, Thomas à Becket, and Thomas Becket. The form "Thomas à Becket" has been shown to be unsanctioned by early usage. Sir Henry Spelman calls him "Thomas of Becket" in *The History and Fate of Sacrilege* (London, 1698), p. 133.

[3] John of Salisbury, "Thomas Londoniensis urbis indigena," in James Craigie Robertson, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, II, 302; William of Canterbury, "ex Londoniarum civibus oriundus," *Materials*, I, 3; and Dugdale, *Monasticon* (ed. 1846), VI, 646. The foregoing references are cited by Radford. John Watney, in *Some Account of the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acon* (London, 1892), p. 9, refers to a grant in the year 1227 of the land formerly belonging to Gilbert Becket, "where the said Blessed Thomas the Martyr was born (duxit originem)."

[4] The year depends upon the evidence of Herbert of Bosham and Benedict of Peterborough. See Radford, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[5] William Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 15. Also William of Canterbury, *Materials*, I, 408.

Rouen; and his mother, Roesa,[6] was a native of Caen. Gilbert, before the birth of Thomas, seems to have become a prosperous merchant in London,[7] and Fitzstephen says that he once held the office of sheriff of the city.[8] At the age of ten Thomas was sent to school at the house of canons at Merton in Surrey, where he formed a strong friendship with the prior Robert. He also attended school in London, and later studied at the University of Paris.[9] His mother died when he was twenty-one. For three years, according to one authority,[10] Thomas was in the service of a kinsman, Osbern, a wealthy and influential man. Fitzstephen, however, says that on the return of Thomas from Paris he served as accountant to the sheriffs of London.[11] Perhaps Osbern was himself a sheriff,[12] or perhaps Thomas held the positions in turn.

During his early life, Thomas alternated between the service of Church and State. He is next found in the household of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, where in spite of some jealousy on the part of others in the same service, he rose rapidly in favor. He went to Rome with Theobald in 1143, and studied law at Bologna and Auxerre. In 1154, the year in which Henry II was crowned king of England, Thomas was made archdeacon of Canterbury. A year later, on the recommendation of Archbishop Theobald, Thomas became chancellor of England. He received the implicit confidence of the king, with whom he was on terms of the most intimate friendship. He took part in the wars of Henry: in the fight against Henry's brother Geoffrey in 1156, in the Welsh War of 1157, and in the Toulouse War of 1159.

Theobald died in 1161, after expressing the wish that Thomas might be his successor. Though the king did not act immediately, he finally made up his mind so definitely that he was not to be swerved by any protest on the part of Thomas or even by the warning that in the new relation their friendship might suffer. Thomas, therefore, became Archbishop of Canterbury. Henry must have been surprised that the new archbishop should take his office so seriously, for Thomas became just as zealous in the cause of the Church as he had been in the cause of the king. Biographers emphasize the change in Thomas' manner of life, and his total renunciation of secular and worldly interests. He resigned the chancellorship, a move which the king keenly resented. Furthermore, Thomas began to reclaim for the Church of Canterbury possessions that had once been taken from her. Among the reclaimed property was the church of Eynesford. When the clerk whom Thomas placed over this church was expelled by William of Eynesford, Thomas promptly excommunicated the latter. Though at the request of the king Thomas absolved William, it was clear that the archbishop was coming into disfavor.

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[6] Radford, *op. cit.*, p. 5, who gives as authority Auctor Anonymus II, *Materials*, IV, 81. By other authorities she is called Matilda (Grim, *Materials*, II, 356), Mahalt (Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 14), or Machilde (Auctor Anonymus I, *Materials*, IV, 3).

[7] Auct. Anon. II, *Materials*, IV, 81.

[8] *Materials*, III, 14.

[9] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 14.

[10] Grim, *Materials*, II, 361.

[11] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 14. Cited by Radford.

[12] See W. H. Hutton, *Thomas Becket* (London, 1910), p. 6.

The long strife between Becket and the king, into which it is impossible to go in detail here, grew out of controversy on the question of jurisdiction over criminous clerks. This was the issue at the Council at Westminster (1163) and the Council of Clarendon (1164). Becket's position was that the church was independent of the state, and that her ministers could be tried only in ecclesiastical courts. In several instances the punishment administered to offenders by the church did not satisfy Henry's idea of justice. Under pressure, Becket promised to abide by the "customs" of the realm, embodied in the Constitutions of Clarendon, though he would not put his seal to the document. When reproved by his cross-bearer, Becket bitterly repented for signing the Constitutions. At the Council of Northampton (November, 1164) personal charges were brought against Becket and unreasonable demands made. Henry even demanded a return of money given to his chancellor for the prosecution of the War of Toulouse, ignoring the fact that at the appointment of Thomas as archbishop he had been released from all secular obligations. The archbishop met the situation by refusing to accept the judgment of the court and appealing his case to the Pope. That night he made his way to Sandwich and thence in an open boat to France.

For six years Becket was an exile in France, most of the time being spent at Sens and Pontigny. He played his trump card by resigning his bishopric into the hands of the Pope (himself an exile), who immediately gave it back to him, thus enabling Becket to say that he had received his charge at the hands of the Pope rather than from the king. Very soon after Becket had gone into exile, Henry banished from the realm all the relatives of Thomas and confiscated their property. What hurt Becket most, in the later stages of the quarrel, was that Henry had his son crowned king by the Archbishop of York, whereas this privilege was the inviolable right of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Finally a superficial reconciliation was brought about at Freteval, on July 22, 1170. On December 1, Becket returned to England, sending before him letters from the Pope suspending and censuring the Archbishop of York and all the bishops who had assisted in the ceremony.

The bishops brought their complaint to the king, and Henry burst out in rage against the unfaithful knights about him who were too cowardly to avenge their king on this low clerk.[13] Fired by these words, four knights, Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard le Breton, set out for Canterbury. They found the archbishop in his church and demanded that he absolve the bishops. He refused; they threatened. The four knights retired only to return a short time later with a clerk named Hugh of Horsea, all armed and with fixed intentions. Angered still more by the attitude and sharp words of Becket, Fitz-Urse struck at him with his sword, grazing the crown of Becket's head and almost severing the arm of Grim, who intervened in behalf of the archbishop. Repeated strokes by the others completed the murder.

But the story of Thomas does not end with his death. After his martyrdom he became in the eyes of the people a more important figure than he had ever been while he was alive. His death, undoubtedly the greatest event in the religious world of Europe since the beginning of the Crusades, produced a tremendous shock wherever the Christian religion was accepted. In his death he had won a moral victory which reflected honor upon Canterbury and the whole nation. England had produced a champion who was the envy of the rest of the world. He was popularly acclaimed a saint long before his formal canonization. When, after the murder, the monks plucked up sufficient courage to adjust the parts of the wounded head and place the body before the high altar, they discovered the haircloth next to the skin and the habit of a monk over it. At once they fell upon their knees, kissed the hands and feet of the corpse, and invoked him as Saint and Martyr.[14] Not long afterward John of Salisbury wrote to the Bishop of Poitiers asking whether in view of the miracles which attested for Thomas the character of a martyr, it were permissible to venerate him as such without waiting for the formal authorization of the Pope.[15] To the growing tendency to exalt Becket the penitence of King Henry doubtless contributed. The spectacle of a king prostrate in self-imposed penance before the tomb of the man who had been his bitterest rival in life, and praying to the new saint to preserve to him his kingdom and assist him against his foes, could not have failed to produce a striking impression.

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[13] Grim, *Materials*, II, 429; William of Canterbury, *Materials*, I, 123; Gervase, *Historical Works*, ed. William Stubbs (Rolls Series No. 73), I, 224.

Thus began the Cult of St. Thomas, which profoundly affected life and thought down to the Reformation. The name of the saint suggested a parallel with the Apostle Thomas,[16] and a parallel between Christ and Becket constantly recurs in the literature of the time. Becket's passion is compared to that of Christ, and as there were supposed to be four authentic lives of Christ, so there were four authentic lives of Becket.[17] At the height of the development of the cult, the offerings at Christ's altar were completely overshadowed in value by those at the altar of St. Thomas. In one year not an offering was placed before the altar of Christ, but more than £954 (probably about

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[14] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 146.

[15] Epistle 748, *Materials*, VII, 469.

[16] This parallel is worked out very elaborately in *The English Conquest of Ireland*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, "mainly from the 'Expugnatio Hibernica' of Giraldus Cambrensis," E. E. T. S., O. S. CVII, chap. XVIII.

[17] See above, p. 11.

£19,000 in modern money) was given at the shrine of Becket.[18] Even this sum was exceeded in 1220, the First Jubilee Year.[19] The name of Christ Church at Canterbury was changed to St. Thomas Church,[20] and in one of the liturgies Christ was besought[2] to save the souls of the petitioners through the blood of Becket.[1] That the devotion to St. Thomas reached such bounds is partially explained by the fact that he was a national saint and that as a result of the many cures reported at his shrine his worship had in it something of a practical nature. St. Thomas was considered a physician,[22] a mediator, and a redeemer![23]

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[18] George Lyttelton, in his *History of the Life of King Henry the Second* (2nd ed., London,1767), IV, 348, gives the following table, "taken from the leger books at Christ Church in Canterbury":

Offerings in one year:

| | £ | s | d |
|---|---|---|---|
| At Christ's altar | 3 | 25 | 6 |
| At Becket's | 832 | 12 | 3 |
| At the Virgin's | 63 | 58 | 6 |
| In the following year: | | | |
| At Christ's altar | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| At Becket's | 954 | 6 | 3 |
| At the Virgin's | 4 | 1 | 8 |

[19] "During the year 1220, the enormous sum of £1071, equivalent to more than £20,000 of our modern money, was received at the three points of pilgrimage" (that is, the tomb, the scene of the martyrdom, and the new shrine). W. A. S. Robinson, "The Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, XIII, 510.

[20] William Somner, *The Antiquities of Canterbury* (London, 1640), p. 250.

[21] "Tu per Thomae sanguinem
Quem pro te impendit
Fac nos, Christe, scandere
Quo Thomas ascendit."

Quoted in George Lyttelton, *op. cit.*, IV, 348.

See Percy Mackaye's play, *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, in which this stanza is used as a pilgrims' chorus.

[22] This characteristic of the popular faith in St. Thomas may be indicated by the following poem, from MS. 10 of the Library at Evreux, published by John Thomas Gilbert, *Register of the Abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin*, Rolls Series (London, 1889), p. xv, note 1:

"Martyr, presul, monache, flos canicorum,
Voti compos, medice Thoma, spes Anglorum,
Vitam nostram statuens pio statu morum,
Nos post mortem munere munera piorum:
Prece tua precibus annuens tuorum,
Prestet id quod petimus regni rex celorum."

[23] Even in *Piers Plowman* the following statement occurs:

"In sauacion of mannys saule    seynt Thomas of Caunterbury
Among vnkynde Cristene    in holychurche was sleye,"

*The Vision of William concerning Piers Plowman*, in three parallel texts, ed. Walter W. Skeat (Oxford, 1886), I, 475 (Passus XVIII, lines 274–5, C–Text).

There are many evidences of Becket's increasing popularity during the Middle Ages. Magdalen College contains two deeds dated from the translation of Thomas;[24] Richard the First instituted an order of knights, called the Order of St. Thomas;[25] Christ Church, Canterbury, came to be popularly called after St. Thomas;[26] his name was more widely inserted in the calendars of the church than that of any other medieval saint;[27] innumerable churches in England and on the Continent were dedicated to him; and a hundred thousand strangers were present at his jubilee in 1420.[28] Fairs and ceremonies were held in his honor; in fact, St. Thomas' Fair is still observed in some parts of England.[29]

London, the birthplace of Becket, sought especially to do him honor. The city placed itself under the patronage of St. Thomas, and his effigy with that of St. Paul appeared on both the Mayoralty and the Corporate Seal, the latter bearing the legend,

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[24] W. D. Macray, *Notes from the Muniments of St. Mary Magdalen College, Oxford* (Oxford, 1882), p. 122.

[25] John Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (London, 1631), p. 204, giving as authority *The Theatre of Honour*, lib. 9, cap. 11.

[26] *Materials*, IV, 142.

[27] J. Charles Wall, *Shrines of British Saints* (London, 1905), p. 75.

[28] See the account of the jubilee in Somner, *op. cit.*, p. 248ff.

[29] "A fair, or market, called by the name of the saint, is still observed in the district (about the Abbey of Arbroath) in July or August." George Angus, in *Notes and Queries*, Eighth Series, V, 177. "The fair, or revel, is still held on the Tuesday after the 7th of July, that day being dedicated, in our old calendars, to *Thomas à Becket.*" Alexander Jenkins, *The History and Description of the City of Exeter* (Exeter, 1806), p. 432, note. "Hence (I take it) the occasion and originall of our (as we call it) Beckets Fair at Cant. beginning to be holden annually on the 7th of that moneth." W. Somner, *op. cit.*, p. 246. Somner, however, is writing in 1640; I do not know whether Becket's Fair is still held in Canterbury or not. It might be of some interest to note that Canterbury has recently put Becket into motion pictures (the picture was filmed by Mr. Benson's Shakespearean Company in June, 1924), and that an historical pageant dealing with the life of Becket was presented there on August 28, 1924. See Clifford Wheeler, *The Life of Thomas à Becket, Saint & Martyr, Presented in a Vivid Poem*, Canterbury, 1924.

Somner quotes the opinion of Sir Henry Spelman that Fairs began "by the flocking of Christians to the place for the solemnizing of some festivall, such either as the feast of the churches dedication or other the like; and . . . it is easy to conjecture to what Saint the place hath been commended, by the Fair-day." Somner adds that he is convinced that the Canterbury Fair originated as a means of gathering a greater multitude thither for the celebration of the anniversary solemnities of Becket's translation and his passion.

"Me que te peperi ne cesses Thomas tueri."[30] A unique fourteenth century ceremony accompanied the inauguration of a mayor in London. The new mayor and the aldermen assembled at the Church of St. Thomas de Acon, and then proceeded to St. Paul's. There in the middle of the nave, between the two small doors, they paused to pray for the soul of Bishop William, who had succeeded in obtaining from William the Conqueror certain liberties for the City of London. Then they moved on to the churchyard, and near the grave of the parents of Thomas, "repeated the *De profundis* etc., in behalf of all the faithful of God departed."[31] Afterward they returned to the Church of St. Thomas, where each man made an offering of one penny. That Becket was connected in the ceremony with Bishop William may suggest that he too was considered a champion of the rights of the people.[32]

The fame of St. Thomas soon extended to foreign countries. France, which had been the scene of his exile, felt that she had some claim to him and strove to honor him. He became popular in Spain: in Toledo, Salamanca, Zamora, and other places, within a few years of his death, largely perhaps because of the fact that the Queen of Castille was the Princess Leonora, daughter of the king of England.[33] About seven years after the murder William the Good, king of Sicily, placed among the figures of saints and worthies in the church of Monreale, near Palermo, a statue of Thomas Becket in his episcopal robes.[34] This circumstance is explained by the fact that the wife of William the Good was Princess Joanna, a daughter of Henry II of England. Likewise Becket was known very early in Iceland. Magnusson says that records relating to Thomas of Canterbury existed in

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[30] Charles Welch, *History of the Tower Bridge* (London, 1894), pp. 70–71.

[31] John Carpenter and Richard Whitington, *Liber Albus*, compiled in 1419, trans. Henry Thomas Riley (London, 1861).

[32] It is curious to note that in 1471, during the Wars of the Roses, the Yorkists believed that they had been especially assisted by St. Thomas, and consequently flocked in great numbers to his shrine. See Walter F. Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury* (London, 1860–76), V, 355–6.

[33] E. S. Dodgson, in *Notes and Queries*, Ninth Series, IX, 344.

[34] Mrs. Jameson, *Legends of the Monastic Orders* (6th ed., London, 1880), pp. 107–8.

Iceland as early as the latter part of the twelfth century,[35] and that his name was used in a prayer by the abbot of Ver in 1255.[36] Magnusson gives a list of thirteen churches of Iceland which were dedicated to Thomas in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and a still longer list of churches which contained images and pictures of the saint.[37]

Into further details of the influence of Becket during the four centuries following his death, such as the healing of hundreds at Canterbury and elsewhere, the richness of the shrine, and the importance of the Canterbury pilgrimage, it is impossible to enter here.[38] Even when the cult of St. Thomas was at its height there were germs of decay. Pilgrimages were undertaken without an appreciation of their significance, and became an object of attack for the author of *Piers Plowman*.[39] Indulgences were abused and were denounced by the Lollards even in the fourteenth century. In 1370, the occasion of the fourth jubilee of St. Thomas, Archbishop Sudbury (then only Bishop of London) told a band of pilgrims that they would have been better off if they had stayed at home and produced fruits worthy of repentance, instead of repairing to Canterbury. This denunciation so aroused a Kentish squire by the name of Thomas of Aldon, that he replied, "My lord Bishop, for that you have thus spoken evil of St. Thomas and are minded to stir up the minds of the people against him, I will forfeit mine own salvation if you yourself die not a shameful death."[40] No doubt many people felt that the curse was in some way responsible for the beheading of Archbishop Sudbury on Tower Hill eleven years later. That one William Thorpe, a Lollard, was charged with preaching openly that men should not go on pilgrimages to Canterbury,

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[35] *Thomas Saga Erkibyskups*, ed. M. Eirikr Magnusson, (Rolls Series, No. 65), II, xviii.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. xxx–xxxiii.

[38] On this subject the reader may be referred to Dean Stanley's *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* and H. Snowden Ward, *The Canterbury Pilgrimages* (Philadelphia, 1905).

[39] "And ȝe that secheth seint Iame and seyntes of Rome,
Secheth seint Treuthe in sauacion of ȝoure soules"
Ed. Skeat, *op. cit.*, I, 129 (Passus VI, lines 198–9, C-text).

[40] Sidney Heath, *Pilgrim Life in the Middle Ages* (London, 1911), pp. 192–3 The reply of Thomas of Aldon is given as Heath quotes it.

Walsingham, and other places, is shown in the narrative of his trial before Archbishop Arundel in 1407.[41] A century later Becket's Jubilee had degenerated into a commercial enterprise, and Erasmus on visiting the shrine made no effort to conceal his contempt for many of the practices at Canterbury.[42] The climax came in 1538, when by order of Henry VIII, the magnificent shrine was destroyed, and a proclamation denouncing Becket as a "rebel and a traitor" ordered all images of him removed and his name erased from church books. After this event, Somner informs us, Becket's Fair and the commerce of Canterbury both declined.[43]

Now that it is possible to regard Becket impersonally, with neither the fervent admiration of medieval devotees, nor the bitter prejudice of those who in the sixteenth century or even much later maligned him, we are in a position to recognize his real greatness as a man. It is not merely an accident of political or religious partisanship, using him as a symbol, that in the universality of his acclaim among all classes, in the fervor of the devotion accorded him, and in the duration of this eminence, no other heroic figure, even an Arthur or an Alfred, can be said to equal him. During his lifetime he was considered "second after the king in four realms"; for nearly four centuries after his death he was the most popular saint in England, venerated throughout the Christian world; during the last three centuries he has won a place among the great men of all time who have fought valiantly and finally given their life for a principle. His importance as a world-figure during the Middle Ages can scarely be overestimated. The church in reality constituted in men's minds at that time the final political and temporal as well as ecclesiastical authority, and Becket personified the power of the church. He was the champion of the spiritual against the royal authority. Furthermore, he was looked upon as the champion of the people. Whatever may have been Becket's real attitude toward the masses—and it probably was not what would to-day be considered democratic—he appealed to the popular imagination as the foe of oppression and the friend of the people. He won multitudes of friends through his kindness to the poor; and after his death, when princes knelt at his shrine, the people rejoiced, feeling that his triumph was theirs.

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[41] Desiderius Erasmus, *Pilgrimages to Saint Mary of Walsingham and St. Thomas of Canterbury*, trans. J. G. Nichols (London, 1875), pp. xx–xxi.
[42] G. G. Coulton, *Chaucer and his England* (3rd ed., London, 1921), p. 143.
[43] *Op. cit.*, p. 246.

The character of Becket has been a subject for discussion from the time of his life to the present. Not long after his death the schools of Paris debated the question, "Whether Thomas à Becket was saved or damned." There have always been two opposing camps: one composed of those who exalt him, and the other of those who can see no good in him whatsoever. The truth, no doubt, lies somewhere between the two extremes. It is obvious that he has often been misunderstood and misrepresented. Most of the misunderstanding regarding the character of Becket has been due to the fact that he has been judged by the standards of a later day rather than by those of the Middle Ages; to accuse him of insincerity is to misjudge the man; to deny that he was imperious and often unreasonable is to fly in the face of recorded testimony. Three characteristics stand out preëminently: he had a strong sense of duty, he possessed personal ambition, and he had a vehement temper. It becomes apparent, as one studies the life of Becket, that he courted martyrdom. Perhaps he realized that his death would mean the triumph of his cause; possibly he felt that the church would gain greater glory by his death than it could from his life. Certain it is that he prophesied his death many times, that he refused to take any precautionary measures, and that he took steps which were bound to antagonize his enemies. His reception of the knights was so provocative that it called forth a reproof from Fitzstephen.[44] In fact, through his violent words to Fitz-Urse, he was the immediate cause of the blow which occasioned his death. There is no doubt that the four knights came to Canterbury Cathedral determined to make him absolve the bishops or to kill him, but it is also certain that they made every effort to avoid killing him in his own church. When Becket became angry and hurled the word "pander"[45] at Fitz-Urse, the die was cast. Fitz-Urse, enraged, struck the first blow, and the others followed.

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[44] Benedict, *Materials*, II, 9; Anon. I, *Materials*, IV, 74; Guernes, lines 5363–5380.

There is a peculiar appeal in martyrdom. In the eyes of the people Becket's death made atonement for everything that they might have questioned in his life, and they at once enthroned him as a saint. The discovery that he had inflicted monastic austerities upon himself confirmed the people in the belief that he had been a saint during his lifetime. The popular imagination was aroused; legend immediately began to grow up. Miracles were reported at the tomb; imaginary adventures came to be ascribed to him; his arrogance, his imperious actions were forgotten, and the Becket of history became merged in the Becket of popular belief.

The Becket of popular tradition was a saint throughout his life, though even his apologists would hardly assert so much of the historical character. His motives were entirely free from personal ambition. He endured persecution at the hands of a tyrannous king and cowardly enemies with untiring patience. He suffered his fate with the utmost submission. The martyrdom in the popular imagination became the slaughter of a meekly submissive lamb. That Becket made such a stout resistance that the knights were unable to drag him from the cathedral was lost sight of, and that he became angered to the point of using very strong language was forgotten. He became idealized, and in the process lost all taint of the earthly.

The extremes to which the popular imagination went may be illustrated by the tradition, given by Westcote, that Becket was related to King Arthur and that Queen Elizabeth was in the same line of descent! After tracing the lineage from Alan, half-brother of King Arthur, to Edgar, who lived about the year 1000, the narrator proceeds:

> Edgar married Maud, daughter of Allard Becket, and by her had issue William. William, Lord of Liskeard, lived in the time of the Conquest, and withstood the Conqueror a long time; but in fine he saw force would not prevail, he privately changed both his name and arms, and took those of his

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[45] "Lenonem." Grim, *Materials*, II, 436. See also Edwin A. Abbott, *St. Thomas of Canterbury, His Death and His Miracles* (London, 1898), I, 126.

> mother . . . He had issue Edmund. Edmund Becket left issue Gilbert. Gilbert Becket married Maud, daughter of the Earl of Chylye: his mother was of Syria: he was born in London: of him is the Earl of Ormund and Queen Elizabeth, and had issue besides other, Thomas Becket, who was, by King Henry II, made Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor, 1161, and after slain, 1170.[46]

It will be noticed that an ingenious method has been used to account for the name Becket. The tradition is remarkable too in that it varies from the better-known legend in making Gilbert's *mother*, instead of his wife, a Syrian woman. The writer says also that Gilbert was born in London, a statement likewise at variance with the facts.[47]

The hypothesis that Becket was of Saxon descent for a time gained several adherents, notably Thierry, Hook, and Lyttleton. In the hands of Thierry, this belief lent support to a theory that Becket represented the cause of the downtrodden Saxon against the Norman conquerors.[48] The idea that Becket was a Saxon probably arose, as Freeman has pointed out, from the fact that Thomas was the first Englishman—in the sense of a native of England of whatever race—who became Archbishop of Canterbury after the Norman Conquest.[49] The error that Becket's mother was a Saracen had even greater currency. Even after historians had rejected the theory that there was an Oriental strain of blood in Becket, allusions to the idea are still to be found in fiction and drama.[50] The hold which the traditional ideas regarding the parentage of Becket have had upon the popular imagination may be illustrated by one sentence from a modern life.

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[46] Thomas Westcote, *A View of Devonshire in 1630*, ed. George Oliver and Pitman Jones (Exeter, 1845), p. 459.

[47] See above, p. 14.

[48] The Swiss poet and novelist, Konrad Ferdinand Meyer, who drew his material for his *novelle, Der Heilige* (1880), from Thierry's *Conquête de l'Angleterre* (see Marion Lee Taylor, *A Study of the Technique in Konrad Ferdinand Meyer's Novellen* (Univ. of Chicago Dissertation, 1909, p. 30), makes his plot depend very largely upon the supposition that Becket was a Saxon. "The conflict between the king and his archbishop coincides to a certain extent with that between Saxon and Norman. Becket is the only Saxon in power. As a diplomat, he would not have the Saxons oppressed too severely. . . . On becoming primate, Becket at once sides with the weaker Saxons, and is willing to forgive the king for the sake of the Saxons. It is the suspicions of the Normans that makes it impossible for the king to yield. Finally, Becket dies for the Saxons and works miracles among them." (*Ibid.*, p. 26.)

[49] E. A. Freeman, "Mr. Froude's Life and Times of Thomas Becket," *Contemporary Review*, XXXI (1878), 835.

> The steady determination, the keen sagacity of the grim stern Anglo-Saxon race from which his father sprung, was mingled in À Beckett, with the fervid imagination, the impassioned impulses of his mother the beautiful Syrian.[51]

Unfortunately for this explanation of the character of Becket, his father was not Anglo-Saxon, nor was his mother a Syrian![52]

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[50] For example, Thomas Miller, in his *Fair Rosamond, an Historical Romance* (Philadelphia, 1839), I, 74, makes Becket say to Rosamond, "Thinkest thou that I, who have the hot eastern blood dashing through my veins, have never worshipped at the altar of thy sex?"

[51] E. M. Stewart, *The People's Martyr* (no date or place), p. 16.

[52] Meyer's *Der Heilige* likewise uses this method of accounting for the contradictory elements in Becket's character. In a letter written by Meyer, he thus analyzes the character of the archbishop: "1. Orientalisches Blut (Benutzung der Legende); 2. Höchste Bildung and gründliche Verachtung seiner rohen Zeit; 3. Ueberlegene Ruhe, höchster Verstand, aber (als Sachse oder Orientale) ein Unterdrückter, daher durch und durch Diplomat; 4. Human, sittlich rein, eine vornehme Natur; 5. Ein Zug von Ehrgeiz oder vielmehr ein Gefühl enormer geistiger Ueberlegenheit; 6. Orientalisch nachtragend, ich will nicht sagen: rachsüchtig, aber doch (gegen Laster und Gewalttat) feingrausam." Quoted in M. L. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

## II

## THE LEGEND OF THE SARACEN PRINCESS—A COMPARISON OF VERSIONS

The most interesting of all the legends which have accumulated about the name of Thomas Becket is that which attributes to him a Saracen mother. The earliest known version of this legend may be found with no material variation in five places: the Later Quadrilogus,[1] the chronicle of John Brompton,[2] some of the manuscripts of the life by Grim,[3] Harleian MS. 978,[4] and Cottonian MS. Julius D 6. Harleian MS. 978 is especially interesting because it shows that the legend originated within a hundred years of the death of Becket. The portion of the manuscript in which the legend of the Saracen Princess is found (fols. 114b-116), is dated by Kingsford from 1260 to 1270.[5] Kate Norgate infers from the words with which the story opens, "Nunc autem ut paulo altius sermonem historiae repetamus," that this was not its first appearance in writing, but that it was an extract from a previously existing work.[6] The same words occur in the introduction to the legend in the Quadrilogus, in Grim, and in the Cottonian manuscript. It seems probable, then, that the legend existed in written form prior to any of these works.

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[1] Printed in Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, CXC, 346. J. A. Giles gives an English translation in his *Life and Letters of Thomas à Becket* (London, 1846), I, 14–22. Although the exact date of composition of this Quadrilogus, which was printed in 1495, is unknown, two manuscripts are from the thirteenth century. See Thomas Duffus Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, Rolls Series, II, 345.

[2] Printed in Twysden, *Scriptores Decem*, columns 1052–1055. The legend as given in Brompton is, after the first paragraph, practically identical with the version of the late Quadrilogus. John Morris, in *The Life and Martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket* (2nd ed., London, 1885), II, 524, says of Brompton, "He has simply copied the first seven chapters of the first *Quadrilogue*, altering only the beginnings and endings of the chapters, and omitting the names of the various authors; and, when the history begins to be rather intricate, he refers his readers to the Life 'quam iiij viri famosi scripserunt.'"

[3] This account is reprinted from Cotton MS. Vitellius C. XII by Robertson, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, Rolls Series, II, 453ff. Both in Grim and in Cottonian MS. Julius D 6 the legend is told in almost the same words as in the Latter Quadrilogus.

[4] This manuscript is described by C. L. Kingsford in the preface to his edition of *The Song of Lewis* (Oxford, 1890), p. XI. The version here found is, he says, after the first few lines, identical with the account of the legend given by Brompton (*op. cit.*, p. XVI). The Legend of the Saracen Princess in Latin is followed by a fragment of five lines, apparently a French translation of the preceding article.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. XVII.

In order to present the story in its earliest form, I submit a translation of the legend as found in the Later Quadrilogus:

> When Gilbert was a young man, he took the cross because of a vow of penance and set out for Jerusalem, taking with him a single serving man, whose name was Richard. When they had arrived among the Christians and among heathens lying in ambush, they entered with others into holy places to pray. But when they wished to come out, all the visitors were captured, put in chains, and given in bondage to a certain Amirald, a very famous chief of the pagans. Here day by day they earned a scanty subsistence by the labors imposed upon them. When Gilbert had served in this Sclavonian bondage for a year and a half, he began to attract more notice and respect than the others; in the eyes of the Amirald especially he came into such grace and favor that he frequently, though still in chains, came before him at the table, and conversed with him and his guests concerning the ideas and customs of the different peoples of the world. For his sake many benefits were conferred upon his fellow-captives, being procured privately whenever it was possible, by the only daughter of the Amirald, a maiden exceedingly courtly and beautiful, who as will appear hereafter, assuredly fell in love with Gilbert. One day when she had an opportunity of speaking freely to him the damsel asked him from what country and from what city he had come, and inquired also concerning the religion and manner of life of the Christians, what was the nature of their belief and their hope of a future life. Gilbert replied that he was an Englishman and a citizen of London, and he expounded the faith of Christ as best he could. Then she demanded of him, "Would you be willing to die for your God and your belief in the Christ whom you profess to follow?" "Most willingly," he replied, "would I die for my God." On hearing these words, the girl appeared transformed, and declared that for his sake she would become a Christian, provided he would pledge himself to take her as his wife. He was silent, however, deliberating within himself, and doubtless fearful of deceit. Though she continued to plead, he refused to promise at once, putting her off from day to day, and seeming unwilling to consent at all. The damsel was greatly affected by his hesitation, and as is usual with women, was filled with anxiety. In the meantime Gilbert and his companions began to meditate flight. One night, after a

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[6] *Dictionary of National Biography*, article "Thomas à Becket."

year and a half of bondage, they broke their chains, escaped from their prison, and after travelling for the remainder of the night, reached the Christian borders.

On the following morning, when the overseer of the slaves came, as was his custom, to take the captives to their work, he found that they had broken their chains, and he pursued them at the head of a powerful company to the Christian borders. There, deprived of all hope, he turned back in anger. When the damsel heard of the escape of the prisoners, she began from that hour to meditate upon her own departure and flight after the fugitives. Day and night she deliberated upon the matter and resolved to escape secretly. On a certain night, when everyone was buried in sleep, without the knowledge of anyone, she collected a small quantity of provisions that she might not be encumbered, and gave herself up to the manifold dangers of flight, entirely forgetful of the riches which belonged to her by hereditary right. O wonderful beyond measure both the courage and the love of this woman in undertaking such difficulties and hardships! She did not hesitate, though she was of such noble birth and possessed such great wealth, irrevocably to forsake all; she did not fear, though frail and delicate, to undergo the dangers of poverty; nor did she hesitate to face alone the innumerable perils of a vast extent of country and of a stormy sea, so long as she might seek for one man, far away and ignorant of her love, though she had no assurance of his being alive or of her being able to find him, and still less assurance of his marrying her, even if she should succeed in finding him.

She traversed safely the territories of the pagans, and sailed toward England with certain foreigners and merchants who knew her language, and who were returning to their own country. Safely they passed through all the perils to which voyagers are exposed, and arrived in England. There the maiden was separated from her companions, with no other means of inquiring her way than by exclaiming, "London! London!" When at length she reached that city, she wandered through the streets, looking wildly into the faces of those she met. From all she received derision, and many boys followed her, ridiculing her dress and the peculiarities of her language. As she thus proceeded through the streets she chanced to pass in front of the house of Gilbert, which was situated in one of the better known and more frequented sections of the city, where now a hospital has been erected in honor of St. Thomas. Someone within spread the report that a young half-crazy woman was passing by, followed by boys and others who were making sport of her. Richard, the servant of Gilbert, who has been mentioned above, ran out with others to see the spectacle. When he approached the damsel, he recognized her, and immediately ran back to his master and told him in secret that it was the daughter of the Amirald to whom crowds of curious people were flocking in wonder. Gilbert was astonished beyond measure that such a thing which seemed impossible should come to pass, and at first refused to believe his servant, but as Richard persisted, his incredulity gradually diminished. Deliberating upon the cause of her coming, he judged it more prudent not to admit her into his own house; so he commanded Richard to conduct her to a certain widow in that vicinity, who would treat her as if she were her own daughter. When the damsel saw and recognized the man, she fell down in a swoon as if dead. After she had recovered her senses, Richard conducted her to the widow, as he had been directed. Gilbert, however, after pondering over the coming of the damsel and wavering between contrary resolutions, finally made up his mind to consult the Bishop of London at St. Paul's. Thither he went on a day that six bishops had met to deliberate concerning weighty business either of church or of state. When he had related to them the events in succession as they have been set down above, the Bishop of Chichester anticipating the others lifted his voice in prophecy, and declared that this was undoubtedly the work not of human but of divine power, and that the woman would be the mother of a son whose sanctity and labours would elevate the Church, to the glory of Christ. The others agreed with the bishop in this opinion, and advised that Gilbert should marry her, provided she be baptized. On the following day, which they had determined upon, she was brought before the bishops in the Church of St. Paul, where a baptistery was prepared, in which she should be baptized. When she was asked in the presence of all, according to the custom of the church, by means of Richard, who acted as interpreter, whether she was willing to be baptized, she replied, "It was for this reason that I came from so distant a place, if only Gilbert will take me for his wife." Accordingly the damsel was baptized, the six bishops performing the rite of baptism with great solemnity, for she was a woman of noble blood, and was still more ennobled by the divine call which she had received. She was then bestowed upon Gilbert in marriage with all due ceremony, after she had been instructed concerning the Catholic faith. Gilbert took her to his home, and at the beginning of their wedlock, she conceived and bore to her husband St. Thomas, the future archbishop of Canterbury and martyr.

On the next day Gilbert was filled with a great desire to return to the Holy Land, so that he became constantly more troubled and frequently could not hide the unusual sadness of his countenance. But he considered the frail sex of his young wife, as well as her ignorance of the language of the country, for on that account doubtless great dangers could easily come to her during his absence. But when his wife perceived that his countenance had changed from what it had been yesterday and the day before, she was greatly troubled, and wondered whether perchance she might be the cause.

Therefore she began beseeching by day and by night to know the reason of such great sadness, nor would she desist until the secret was made manifest. So Gilbert, wearied by her constant entreaties, disclosed his wish to his wife, and she being a woman of high hope and strong in the faith of Christ, not only consented to her husband's wishes, but urged him to carry out whatever plan he believed to be pleasing to his Creator, and to have no consideration for her "As for me," she added, "I trust firmly and steadfastly in my God, who has called me to a knowledge of His name, who will not desert me when you are gone, but who will preserve me from all contact with peril just as he did before when I did not know Him. Only I beg that you will leave Richard with me, because he has a knowledge of my language, and will be better able than the others to minister to my necessities." Gilbert delighted at these words prepared the things which were necessary for his journey. When he had provided what his wife and family would require while he was away, he set out for Jerusalem, where he remained for three and a half years. Afterward he returned and found his son Thomas, a beautiful child, and held in high esteem in the eyes of all.

It will be noticed that we are not told definitely that Gilbert and the Saracen maiden met in London before his consultation with the bishops. Richard convinces his master simply through persistence that the lady is without, and it is not clear whether her swoon is occasioned by the sight of Gilbert or of Richard[7]. Such vagueness served as a challenge to the imagination of later writers who treated the story, and some of them very readily supplied the details that were lacking.

The Legend of the Saracen Princess is told in the life of Becket which forms part of the *South English Legendary* Two versions have been printed: one represented by MS. Laud 108 (ca. 1280-1290)[8] and the other by MS. Ashmole 43 (ca. 1310, Thiemke). The latter version corresponds in most respects to that of the Quadrilogus, but here it is definitely stated that after his servant had informed him of the presence of the Saracen maiden, Gilbert went in person to meet her, and she fell in a swoon at sight of him, while he stood rooted to the spot in amazement.[9] The Saracen emir is called "Amyrand" and his daughter "Amyraud." The other version, represented by MS. Laud 108, varies in several particulars and is in general more elaborate. The captivity of Gilbert and the servant is lengthened by a year, and they break prison and escape on the same day as that in which the conversation on religion and matrimony has occurred between Gilbert and the Saracen maiden.[10] Here it is the appearance of the servant which causes the maiden to fall in a swoon.[11] When Gilbert tells his story to the six bishops assembled in St. Paul's Cathedral, it is the voice of the Bishop of Winchester that is raised in prophecy rather than that of the Bishop of Chichester. A picturesque touch is added to the account of the maiden's hearing before the bishops. When she is asked whether she is willing to be christened, she replies that she is, provided Gilbert will wed her, but if not, she will not accept Christianity, for she would rather go back to her own land. When she is baptized, she is given the name of Alisaundre. The servant is called Richard Mone.[12]

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[7] " . . . jussit Ricardo ut ad quamdam matronam viduam ei vicinam eam adduceret, quae ipsam tanquam filiam suam in omnibus exhiberet. Quem cum videret puella et ipsum agnosceret, mox quasi mortua cecidit jacens in exstasi resupina."

[8] Hermann Thiemke, *Die M. E. Thomas Beket-legende des Gloucesterlegendars, kritisch herausgegeben mit Einleitung*, Palaestra, CXXXI, (Berlin, 1919). The date of the various manuscripts is considered on pages 1 and 2 of the introduction. Both MS. Laud and MS. Ashmole 43 are in the Bodleian Library. MS. Laud 108 has also been edited by Carl Horstmann in E. E. T. S. 87.

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[9] "Atenede þo þis Gilbert bifore þis maide com
þat maide fel adoun iswowe, as sone as heo him isei,
þat deol it was among þat folc, þat þer stode nei
þis Gilbert heold him somdel stille, as him noþing nere."
(MS. Ashmole 43, lines 96–99.)

[10] "Sore heo weren alle aferd for traison of þat womman
þat prison heo breken riȝt þulke daie at eue;"
(MS. Laud 108; lines 46, 47.)

[11] "Also tyme ase þis knaue to þis mayde cam
For joye heo ful adoun iswowe opon þe harde ston.
þo hire stat was aȝein icome, þe knaue hire op nam,
And heo wel gladliche wiþ him eode to þulke guode womman."
(Laud 108, lines 83–86.)

It would seem that the ambiguity of the pronoun used in the Latin versions to refer to the person responsible for the maiden's swooning has thus given rise to two interpretations, represented in different manuscripts of the South English Legendary.

[12] Laud 108 is dated 1280–90 by Thiemke and 1285–95 by Horstmann; whereas Ashmole 43 is dated ca. 1310 by both. (Thiemke, *op. cit.*; Horstmann, E. E. T. S., O. S., 87, xiii, xiv.) It is curious that an earlier manuscript should contain more variations from the legend as told in the Quadrilogus, and also that the name "Becket" (which occurs rarely in the earliest lives) should be used.

But there is a fifteenth century manuscript of *The South English Legendary* (Bodleian 14716 or Rawl. poet. 225) which contains a version of the Legend of the Saracen Princess with many added details. (See Appendix A.) The Saracens are replaced by the "Iewes," and Gilbert and Richard are placed in captivity in "Iewry." There is more information concerning their travels in Palestine: the pilgrims stop at the city of Acre; they pray at the river Jordan; they remain seven nights at Jerusalem, make a pilgrimage to Bethlehem, and visit Mt. Sinai and Mt. Olivet. Of more significance is the fact that, although fearful of woman's guile, Gilbert pledges his troth to the daughter of the Soudan. He seems easily to forget his promise, however, for at the first opportunity he escapes from prison and returns home without her. When she pursues him, according to this account, she takes money with her. Then occurs an important detail not present in any other versions of the legend before modern times, but having a striking resemblance to the various Bekie ballads (see below, p. 65): when the maiden reaches Gilbert's door, she finds a wedding already in progress, for Gilbert is being married to the daughter of a burgess in London, who lives in Thames Street! Although it is stated that Gilbert loves the girl he is about to marry, she disappears from the story completely with the arrival of the Eastern maiden. When the latter is baptized, her name of "Ysope" is changed to "Ione." Both of the names are peculiar to this version.

John Grandison, Bishop of Exeter from 1327 to 1369, wrote a "Vita beati Thomae Martyris," which contains the story of the Saracen Princess, in substance the same as the Quadrilogus but considerably condensed. The conciseness of the account, especially near the end, causes several omissions. We may have no regret over the loss of the long exclamatory passage about the courage and love of the maiden in undertaking such a dangerous enterprise,[13] but we can less readily spare the details of the baptism, especially the answer of the maiden when she is asked whether she is willing to be baptized. In spite of its faults, Grandison's account is very specific in dealing with the arrival of the maiden at Gilbert's house, and states that when she saw Richard, she fell in a swoon.[14]

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[13] "O mirandam nimis . . . . . et si quaesitum hominem reperiret."

The version given in Mirk's *Festial* (ca. 1415) marks an important step in the development of the legend, for it expressly states that the Saracen maiden helped Gilbert to escape. The account is so brief that it can be quoted entire:

> "This holy Seynt Thomas was born yn þe cyte of London, and had a fadyr was callet Gylbert, þat was scheryve of London.
>
> þen felle hit, as þys Gylbert went to þe holy lond, he was taken and put yn dysstres, þen come þer a worschypfull woman of þe contrey to hym and sayde, yf he wold plyght hys troth to wed hur, scho wold helpe hym out of his doses. And soo scho dyd. Then went Gylbert hom to Engelond. And when scho segh hyr time, scho come aftyr and met wyth hym at Seynt Poules chyrch yn London. Then made Gylbert þe byschop of þe cyte forto folow hur, and aftyr forto wed hom. And so Gylbert gate Thomas of this woman."[15]

It will be noticed that the proposal of the Saracen girl here assumes a different form. She does not promise to become a Christian if Gilbert will marry her, but she will help him out of his plight. Mirk does not say that she is a princess, or the daughter of Gilbert's captor. She is merely "a worschypfull woman." The implication is that Gilbert consented, and that part of their agreement was for him to go ahead to England. Another remarkable feature of this version is that the meeting of Gilbert and the woman takes place at St. Paul's Cathedral. There is no explanation: one is left to choose between considering it pre-arranged, accidental, or miraculous. In the next sentence the word "folow" is rather mysterious. It is hardly reasonable to suppose the meaning to be that Becket persuaded the bishop to go in pursuit of his love! Probably the manuscript is corrupt, and some word meaning "baptize" (perhaps "assoile") is intended.

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[14] Grandison's life exists in three fifteenth century manuscripts in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Nos. 275, 464, and 467. For the Legend of the Saracen Princess as given in Grandison, see Appendix B.

[15] *Mirk's Festial*, ed. T. Erbe, E. E. T. S., E. S., XLVI (London, 1905), I, 38.

One of the fullest and most attractive versions of the Legend of the Saracen Princess is to be found in the anonymous English translation of the *Legenda Aurea* (1438).[16] Gilbert and his servant, who is here named William, have made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem and are coming homeward when they are captured by a band of Saracens. They are taken before a prince named Amyrand, who gives orders that they shall be thrust into the "deipist dougeon of the castel", where they suffer great sorrow and seldom have any meat or drink. When the prince's daughter offers to forsake her heritage and become a Christian for Gilbert's sake if he will wed her, he promises to do so. His escape from prison shortly afterwards is attributed simply to the providence of God. The maiden wanders for many years before she reaches England, but when at last she arrives at London she pauses, as if supernaturally directed, at the door of Gilbert Becket. He is more hospitable than the hero of any of the preceding versions, for we are told that "gilbert beket toke her up and confirtide hir in the beste wise he cowde and led hir into his howse and bade his men give hir mete and drynke."

Caxton includes the story in his edition of *The Golden Legend* (1483),[17] but his version is merely a condensation of that of the anonymous translation, and much of the beauty has been sacrificed. The name of the Saracen prince is given as Amurath.

Laurentius Wade (1497),[18] who retells the legend at considerable length, refers as his authority to John, Bishop of Exeter (John Grandison), but there are several details which are not in Grandison. Here Gilbert is a "burgesse" of London who takes the cross in his "bachellery." He and his servant Richard are on the way to the sepulchre when they are taken by Saracens. The Saracen maiden promises both to accept Christianity and to deliver Gilbert from prison if he will agree to marry her. Her stock of English, it will be noticed, has increased by one word (England).

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[16] British Museum Add. MS. 11565. See Appendix B. The Latin and French versions of the *Golden Legend* do not include the story of the Saracen Princess.

[17] *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints, as Englished by William Caxton*, Temple Classics, ed. F. S. Ellis (London, 1900), II, 182–184.

[18] "Thomas Beket, Epische Legende, von Laurentius Wade (1497)," ed. C. Horstmann, *Englische Studien*, III (1880), 409–469.

The Legend of the Saracen Princess was retold several times during the sixteenth century. It forms a part of the life of Becket given in the *Nova Legenda Angliae* (1516),[19] the account being abridged from the Late Quadrilogus. In *The Kalendre of the New Legende of England*, printed by Richard Pynson perhaps in the same year as the preceding, which is simply an epitome of the *Nova Legenda Angliae*, one sentence suffices to summarize the legend. "How his moder beynge a pagen came to London fro fer countres and by the goodness of our lorde was conuerted to the fayth."[20] Then there is in the British Museum a short life of Becket printed by Pynson perhaps in 1520, which contains the legend of the Saracen Princess. The book has been frequently quoted by writers and has been ascribed to A. Barclay. But a collation with Caxton's life of Becket revealed few variations in wording—no more, in fact, than one would find in two manuscripts of the same work. The little book seems to be simply a reissue by Pynson of the Life of St. Thomas of Canterbury from Caxton's translation of the *Golden Legend*.[21]

The collections of saints' lives by the Spanish hagiographers, Alfonso Villegas and Pedro Ribadeneira, have often been translated into English, and some of these translations contain the story of the Saracen Princess.[22] The earliest translation of Villegas, by W. and E. Kinsman, describes Gilbert as "a man inferioure to none of his cittizens for kindred and riches; and superior to most, for a singular good carriage, and holie conversation."[23] The account of the legend is greatly condensed, and omits even the proposal of the Saracen lady.

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[19] *Nova Legenda Anglie: as collected by John of Tynemouth, John Capgrave, and others, and first printed, with new lives, by Wynkyn de Worde, A. D. 1516*, ed. Carl Horstmann (Oxford, 1901).

[20] Printed in Ewald Flügel, *Neuenglische Lesebuch* (Halle, 1895), I, 213–14.

[21] In the collation I used the 1483 edition of Caxton, in which the life of Becket begins on folio CV. The "exposicion of hys name" which forms a prologue in Caxton is omitted in the life printed by Pynson, and the following sentence near the end of the life by Caxton is omitted for obvious reasons in the later work: "yf I shold here expresse alle the myracles / that it hath plesyd god to shewe for thys holy saynt / it shold conteyne an hole volume / therfore at thys time I passe ouer vnto the feste / of hys translacion where I purpose wyth the grace of god to recyte some of them."

Beaulieu, in a seventeenth century French life of St. Thomas,[24] tells the legend at considerable length and makes one interesting contribution. After the Saracen maiden has arrived in England, Gilbert hesitates to marry her, because in a spirit of penitence he has consecrated his life to God in the wars against the infidels. Finally God inspires him to consult the bishop of London on the matter.

The brief account in Newcourt's *Repertorium* (1708)[25] says that Gilbert escaped "by the help of this Matildis." According to Baillet,[26] Gilbert was an English gentleman who took the cross through devotion and was made prisoner in the year 1114. Richard Challoner, in his *Britannia Sancta*, omits the Saracen

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[22] The following list of translations is based in part upon those mentioned by Professor Gerould in his *Saints' Lives*,pp. 323–4:

| | |
|---|---|
| Translation of Villegas by W. and E. Kinsman, | 1610–15 |
| Reissued with additions from Ribadeneira | 1636 |
| Translation of Villegas by John Heigham, with additions from Ribadeneira, | 1630 |
| Flos Sanctorum (a version of Villegas), no date or translator's name, | |
| Edward Dawson (translation of Ribadeneira's complete collection) Douay, | 1615 |
| E. Daras (translation of Ribadeneira), third edition, Paris, | 1862 |
| Il Libro d'Oro (Part Four is a translation of Villegas), | 1905 |

The translation by John Heigham agrees almost word for word with that of Kinsman. E. Daras does not give the legend of the Saracen Princess. The story in *Il Libro d'Oro* shows so many later influences that it can best be treated with nineteenth century versions.

[23] *The Lives of Saints, written in Spanish by the learned and Reuerend Father Alfonso Villegas* (Doway, 1615), p. 611.

[24] *La Vie de St. Thomas Archevesque de Cantorbery et Martyr* (Paris, 1674), pp. 1–12.

[25] R. Newcourt, *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense* (London, 1708), I, 552. The same account verbatim may be found in Robert Seymour (John Mottley), *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster* (London, 1734), I, 538–9, and William Maitland, *The History and Survey of London* (3rd ed., London, 1760), II, 886.

[26] *Les Vies des Saints* (Paris, 1701), III, 364.

maiden's proposal to "Mr. Becket," though he says that as a result of Gilbert's exposition of the Christian faith she expressed a desire to become a Christian.[27] Thomas Pennant, in speaking of the hospital of St. Thomas of Acon in London, says that Gilbert married the fair Saracen in the Holy Land![28]

For many centuries the story of the Saracen Princess was regarded as authentic; Joseph Berington in 1790 was the first to reject it.[29] Even after that time, it occurs repeatedly in works purporting to be historical, sometimes, it is true, being presented with some misgiving, but very often being told for fact. It would seem that it has been impossible to retell the legend without altering it in some way. The versions in nineteenth century history and biography present considerable variety and sometimes make interesting contributions to the story.

According to some accounts, Gilbert was an English gentleman.[30] Müller makes him an English knight;[31] one French version represents him as a Saxon knight, "Vicomte de Londres";[32] *Il Libro d'Oro*[33] says he was one of the principal barons of England. Though he was a gentleman, he was poor in this world's goods, according to two French accounts.[34] Others rate him as a distinguished middle-class citizen;[35] according to some he was a merchant.[36] There are differences of opinion as to Gilbert's motive for going to the Holy Land. Mackintosh thinks that he went "probably not without some views to his calling as a trader."[37] Others consider him simply a pilgrim in the Holy Land.[38] Thierry is uncertain whether Gilbert went to Jerusalem as a result of a vow of penance, or to seek fortune in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. If the latter were his motive, Thierry remarks, he was less fortunate than the squires and sergeants of Normandy had been in England.[39] Most writers say that he "took the cross and went to Palestine."[40] Some specify that he was connected with the Crusades.[41] A popular biography quotes a tradition that "Gilbert as a young man, followed Duke Robert on his march to the Holy Land in the First Crusade."[42] The occasion of the capture varies. According to Bataille,[43] on a certain day when Gilbert was at Jerusalem with a small number of fellow-soldiers, he had gone into a temple to pray to God for the success of a war to deliver the tomb of His Son. According to Demimuid,[44] Gilbert had performed his devotions at the tomb of the Savior, and was preparing to return to England when he was captured by a band of Saracens.

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[27] Bishop Richard Challoner, *Britannia Sancta* (London, 1745), pp. 323–4.

[28] Thomas Pennant, *Some Account of London* (Second edition, London, 1791), p. 416.

[29] *The History of the Reign of Henry the Second* (Dublin, 1790), I, 74.

[30] See L'Abbé Petin, *Dictionnaire Hagiographique* (Paris, 1848), II, col. 1156.

[31] Adalbert Müller, *Allgemeines Martyrologium vollständiger Heiligenkalendar der Katholischen Kirche* (Regensburg, 1860), p. 659.

[32] *Saint Thomas de Cantorbéry*, par l'auteur de la Vie du P. Claver (Lille, 1852), p. 5.

[33] Trans. F. Alexander (Boston, 1905), p. 458.

[34] C. Richard's *Abrégé des Vies des Saints* (Paris, 1862), II, 536, and Godescard, *Les Vies des Saints Pères et Martyrs*, (Paris, 1844), p. 561, say that he was "un gentilhomme peu favorisé de la fortune."

[35] See Mgr. Demimuid, *St. Thomas Becket* (Paris, 1909), p. 1, and a German account in *Der Katholic*, XXVI (1827), 258.

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[36] *Biographie Universelle* (Paris, 1811), IV, 22; Mrs. Arthur Bell, who retells the legend, though she does not give it credence, in *Lives and Legends of the English Bishops and Kings* (London, 1904), p. 210. "Gilbert was probably a Mercer," Thomas Allen, *History and Antiquities of London*, etc., continued by Thomas Wright (London, 1839), II, 340–1; John Watney, *Some Account of the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acon* (London, 1892), p. 8.

[37] Sir James Mackintosh, Sir Walter Scott, and Thomas More, *The Cabinet History of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (Philadelphia, 1830), I, 133.

[38] Charles Knight, *A History of England* (London, 1862), I, 271–2, says that he was a pilgrim in the Holy Land after the First Crusade. *Biographie Universelle* says that he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem out of motive of piety. Others say simply that he was travelling in the Holy Land.

[39] Augustin Thierry, *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans*, trans. William Hazlitt (London, 1856), II, 53.

[40] C. Bataille, *Vie Politique et Religeuse de Thomas Becket* (Paris, 1842), p. 3, says that Gilbert was induced to take the cross by a motive of piety as were others by a love of adventure.

[41] Charles Knight, *London* (London, 1851), IV, 260, says that "Gilbert was following the fortunes of his lord in the Crusades." William Pinnock's edition of Goldsmith's *History of England* says that "Gilbert was serving as a private soldier in Palestine." (55th American edition; Philadelphia, 1854), p. 58 note. S. Baring-Gould, *The Lives of the Saints* (Revised edition; Edinburgh, 1914) XII, 327, refers to him as a "gallant soldier of the Cross."

[42] Susan Cunnington, *The Story of Thomas Becket* (London, 1914), p. 14.

[43] *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

[44] *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

The Saracen maiden was, according to *Il Libro d'Oro*,[45] the daughter of an admiral of the Soldan of Egypt. Mackintosh offers a unique suggestion to account for Gilbert's being allowed to converse with her. After speaking of Gilbert as a trader, he says:

> "He and his only attendant Richard were made prisoners by a Mussulman emir, whose daughter they were sometimes permitted to see; a permission which loses much of its improbability, if we suppose that he was employed in procuring European ornaments for her, and was allowed to see a lady so exalted above him from a mixture of convenience and contempt."[46]

According to Bataille, the Saracen princess gained the good graces of Gilbert's jailers and spent entire hours with the prisoner. There is a tendency in some of these later versions to omit her proposal, and say simply that she was so deeply touched by Gilbert's discourse upon religion that she immediately expressed a desire to become a Christian.[47] In Bataille, however, she demands his hand as the price of liberty. Mackintosh varies from the Quadrilogus in Gilbert's reception of the proposals When he declares himself ready to die for his faith, the emir'. daughter exclaims, "Then let us escape together." Gilbert "could not refuse. Either his courage left him or the attempt failed. He escaped with safer companions."[48] In a French life, after accepting the proposal of the maiden, Gilbert vows to keep his faith with her for seven years.[49] But in L'Huillier's account the setting is changed entirely.[50] There in the presence of the maiden the Saracen emir asks Gilbert a question which is to determine the fate of the captive; he demands that Gilbert renounce the Christian religion. Gilbert refuses in such definite terms that they make a profound impression upon the young lady, who seeks him out and proposes to help him escape if he will marry her.

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[45] *Loc. cit.*
[46] *Loc. cit.*
[47] See l'Abbé Petin, Godescard, or C. Richard, *op. cit.*
[48] *Op. cit.*, I, 133.
[49] L. Auteur de la Vie du P. Claver, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[50] A. L'Huillier, *Saint Thomas de Cantorbéry* (Paris, 1892), I, p. 1.

Many of these later accounts say that Gilbert escaped from prison by the assistance of the Saracen maiden.[51] Some specify that she not only released Gilbert but accompanied him in his flight.[52] Müller,[53] though he does not account for Gilbert's escape, says that he took the daughter of his master with him. *Il Libro d'Oro* says that Gilbert "being set at liberty, married her and took her to England."[54] Some accounts, of course, are faithful to the Quadrilogus in saying that she followed Gilbert to England. After Gilbert's flight, according to Robert,[55] the princess was inconsolable, not because of the loss of a lover, but because there was no one to instruct her in the Christian religion. Her coming to England is attributed purely to religious motives. One writer,[56] perhaps disliking the idea of the heroine's leaving her father, says that after Gilbert had recovered his liberty, the emir died. In an Italian life she does not go empty-handed, but takes as much gold and jewels as she can.[57] In Charles Dickens' *A Child's History of England* she pays for her passage on an English vessel with some of her jewels.[58]

Details vary, too, after the arrival of the Saracen maiden in England. In most versions, it is Richard who first sees her; in two French accounts,[59] the meeting takes place on the public square. When Gilbert asks her why she has come from such a distant country, she replies, "I have come to learn more about the Christian religion."[60] In one of these versions,[61] Gilbert himself conducts her to the house of the widow. The next day he goes to see her, and as soon as she perceives him, she throws herself at his feet and with many tears beseeches him to have pity upon her, and to continue the work of her salvation. Gilbert is so touched by her tears that he is inspired to take her for his wife, that he may instruct her in religious matters at his leisure. Unfortunately, he has made a vow to consecrate his life to the war against the infidels, and does not feel free to marry.[62] In his dilemma he goes to the bishops. In Charles Knight's *London*, Gilbert's hesitation to marry the girl is entirely lost; unlike the hero of the Quadrilogus he spends no time brooding over the exigencies of the situation.

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[51] For example, Albert Du Boys, *L'Église et L'État en Angleterre* (Lyons et Paris, 1887), p. 160; also Thomas Allen, Baring-Gould, Mrs. Arthur Bell, Charles Knight, Thierry, and Watney.

[52] For example, *Biographie Universelle.*

[53] *Op. cit.*

[54] *Op. cit.*, p. 458.

[55] L'Abbé Robert, *Histoire de Saint Thomas Becket* (Limoges, 1844), p. 43.

[56] L'Auteur de la Vie du P. Claver, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[57] Pietro Balan, *Storia di San Tommaso di Cantorbery* (Modena, 1867), I, 24.

[58] New York: A. L. Burt Company, no date, p. 80.

[59] L'Abbé Robert, *op. cit.*, and l'auteur de la Vie du P. Claver.

[60] In Robert's account she adds, "C'est là tout mon desir en ce monde."

[61] That of Robert.

> "With tears of joy was the stout yeoman seen hurrying away his beauteous infidel to be baptized in his own faith, preparatory to their immediate marriage."[63]

According to Woodward, Wilks, and Lockhart,[64] she became the *second* wife of Gilbert and transmitted to her son the designation *d'Acon.*

In a recent biography the legend is changed entirely.

> It was believed that when he (Gilbert) was marching amongst the Crusaders he showed some kindness to a Saracen maiden during a siege or an engagement, and that in her distress afterward the girl fled from the ruined city and sought the kindly soldier who had once befriended her. Knowing only the two words "Gilbert" and "London," she traversed Europe and crossed the Channel and at length found her protector, who received her with great honour and made her his wife.[65]

Nineteenth century drama and fiction, as well as history and biography, have made their contribution to the Legend of the Saracen Princess. Gilbert's occupation is emphasized in George Darley's play[66] by De Morville, who complains that Becket is the son of a Saxon truckster. Instead of being a princess, the Saracen maiden in this play is a Syrian bond-slave. In a play by Alexander Hamilton, Gilbert becomes ill after his capture and is taken care of by the Saracen princess. They fall in love; he is restored to health and ransomed. When he gains his freedom, he asks for her hand, but her father frowns upon the union. They swear to wed despite all obstacles, and he leaves for England. One day shortly after his arrival a fair youth kneels at his feet, and he recognizes the maid in disguise. They are married in a little chapel by the seashore.[67] A romance by Thomas Miller[68] adds an interesting detail in treating her voyage to England. When she departs from her home, she takes most of her costly jewels with her, and so excites the envy of the crew on board ship that they plan to murder her for her wealth, but are prevented by the bravery of a knight who is returning from the Holy Land. Instead of the two words of English with which she is usually credited, Douglas Jerrold's play allows her the knowledge of only one—Gilbert—and Thomas Becket is made to say, "A cherub heard the word and bore it to my father."[69] According to most versions Richard, the servant, is the one who first sees and recognizes the beautiful heathen, but in Miller's story it is Gilbert himself. In Meyer's *Der Heilige*,[70] Gilbert spies her passing, grasps her by the hand, and leads her into his home. After her baptism she receives the name Grace. Aubrey De Vere, in his play, *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, makes one of his characters suggest an entirely different story to replace the well-known tradition. Instead of its being true that Becket's mother was an Asian princess who freed Gilbert and fled with him to England, the Earl of Leicester thinks it more likely that

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[62] Perhaps this idea comes from Beaulieu. See p. 38.

[63] *Op. cit.*, I, 272.

[64] B. B. Woodward, Theodore C. Wilks, and Charles Lockhart, *A General History of Hampshire* (London, 1870?), II, p. 187, n. 2.

[65] Susan Cunnington, *op. cit.*, p. 15. A recent editorial, too, gives the story in a strangely contorted form. "Some authorities say his father, Gilbert à Becket, deserted his wife, reported to be a Saracen, on the Continent and that she followed him to London before the birth of her son." (*Philadelphia Public Ledger*, July 21, 1927.) I have not discovered the "authorities" to which the editor refers.

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[66] *Thomas à Becket* (London, 1840), Act I, Scene 1.

[67] Alexander Hamilton, *Thomas à Becket* (New York, 1863), Act II, Scene 2, pp. 36–37.

[68] *Fair Rosamond* (Philadelphia, 1839), I, 74.

[69] *Thomas à Becket*, Act II, Scene 1.

[70] C. F. Meyer, *Der Heilige* (57th edition; Leipsig, 1910), p. 35.

> She cut her flaxen Saxon tresses short,
> And followed him to Syria, garbed a page,
> With cross upon her shoulder, and a heart
> Made strong by maiden love.[71]

The accounts noted above have all been brief recitals of the legend, but there have been several attempts during the nineteenth century to retell the story of the Saracen Princess upon a larger scale. One of these, by an anonymous author, is entitled, "The Legend of Becket."[72] The author pretends to follow Brompton, but he embellishes the narrative at will. The story is full of details not elsewhere encountered. Through purely religious motives Gilbert Becket, a Saxon of London, joins the banner of Robert of Normandy and engages in the First Crusade. He and Richard are captured by the Saracens as a result of a visit to a cave reported to have been the dwelling-place of John the Baptist. But the cave proves to be occupied by Arabs, and the Englishmen are soon fettered and borne away into the country. The emir offers them liberty if they will become Mohammedans, but they spurn the offer and are led away to various modes of toil, Gilbert being consigned to the gardeners. Gilbert often has the opportunity of observing the princess from where he is at work, and he falls in love with her before he is observed by her. Zuleika, for such is the name of the Saracen lady, soon beholds him with the dawning of youthful admiration, and expresses her interest in him by working a transformation in the prison cell in which Gilbert and his fellows are confined, and in having an appetizing meal set before them. At crucial moments her father is conveniently removed to Jerusalem, where he fights against the Gentiles while the friendship of Gilbert and Zuleika develops, and later while Zuleika is planning and carrying out her flight.

The author misses no opportunity to introduce the sensational. The Saracens are losing ground before the Christians, and the idea occurs to the emir that he might bribe some of his stalwart captives to fight for the Saracens. He decides to begin the experiment with Gilbert. Gilbert is promised freedom, wealth, honor, and finally the hand of Zuleika if he will embrace Mohammedanism. On Gilbert's refusal the chief decrees his death. Zuleika, however, makes provision for his escape. On that night the guards are drugged, and the captain himself leads the prisoners to freedom. Zuleika's flight is attended with numerous adventures and hair-breadth escapes. She subsists on fruits and herbs, and spends the first night in a cave. On the following day she is captured by a band of Saracen robbers and carried off into the wilderness. But a few hours later they encounter a troop of Christian warriors, and the Arabs are put to flight, leaving Zuleika. The Crusaders conduct her in safety to the coast, and an old knight, like a true Samaritan, puts her on board a vessel bound for England and supplies the money for her passage. After two months of sailing, she finds herself in Dover, and a courteous townsman starts her on the road to London. Again there is a capture and a rescue, the former at the hands of a band of Norman hunters, and the latter by Saxon outlaws, who prove kind hosts to the bewildered Saracen damsel. After surmounting many difficulties she arrives in London. Gilbert meanwhile is languishing in hopeless affection. When he hears that Zuleika is before his house, the shock of the news is too much for him and he falls helplessly into his servant's arms. He soon recovers, however, and rushes to the street. A short time later, Gilbert is seen pressing through the crowd with the insensible figure of Zuleika, as he carries her to the house of Githa, his foster-mother.

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[71] Act I, Scene 1, pp. 5–6.
[72] *Fraser's Magazine*, XX (1839), 389, 560.

So there have been contributed to the legend among other details the mention of the cave of John the Baptist, the employment of Gilbert as a gardener, the idea of Gilbert's falling in love with the maiden before she observes him, the scheme to bribe Gilbert into joining the Saracens, the decreeing of his death, and the details of the escape of both Gilbert and the maiden, including her capture on four different occasions!

There is also a poem by Robert Buchanan, entitled "À Beckett's Troth."[73] Here the story is treated in a very romantic manner, with marked variations from the original legend. À Beckett imprisoned in Palestine falls in love with the Eastern maiden who sometimes brings sunshine to his prison cell by her presence. They are able to converse only in eye-language, and their eyes talk only of love. One night she comes to the prison, throws wide the door, and tells him (with her eyes) to fly. He needs no second bidding, but as he departs he promises her (with his eyes) to return and marry her. After he returns to England, however, he forgets "the angel of his prisonhouse." Years pass by, and she decides he cannot come, though he has sworn he loves her. Since she too has sworn love, she decides to go to him.

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[73] *Once a Week*, X, 573–4.

> She wander'd forth,
> And journey'd till she stood beside the sea,
> And heard the murmur of the waves, that seemed
> Like Gilbert's speech she could not understand.

By the aid of her two words of English she reaches the "sunkist strand of Italy" and eventually London. As she is walking along the street, she sees a pageant passing by, with Gilbert in the midst, erect and proud. She falls at his feet, but he does not recognize her. When he does realize who is before him, he looks at her so fondly that she understands his gaze to mean, "I love thee—love thee—and will make thee mine!"

The most extended treatment of the legend is to be found in Isabella Golding Clark's *The Legend of the Chapel of St. Thomas of Acon.*[74] Here it requires over four hundred pages and an introduction of more than a hundred to tell the story of the Saracen Princess. The author mentions as her authorities the chronicle of Brompton, and the ballads of Susie Pye and of Burd Isabel.[75] The legend purports to be written by one Anselm Becket, an Augustine monk, who has explored his kinsman's records and discovered the story. According to this version, Gilbert à Becket is a citizen of London whose father is a wealthy merchant. Though Gilbert goes to Palestine to trade, he is resolved to perform his devotions at sacred places first. One day Gilbert, his servant Richard, and other travelers enter a grotto in order to seek shelter from the noon-day heat. When they emerge they are captured by Ethiops, archers of Kaibal-Eddin, Emir of Acre. At first Gilbert and Richard are set to performing menial duties, but when it is accidentally discovered that they are skilled at "forge and brazier," their work is changed.

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[74] London: The Church Press Co., 1865.

[75] For a consideration of the relation of these ballads to the legend of Becket, see pp. 72–74.

The daughter of the emir, who is here called Zuzima, though the name is shortened to Zima whenever necessary for the metre, first visits the cell of the captives as a wondering child, admiring the toys which they make; then as thoughtful maiden, to converse on higher themes. Kaibal during a visit paid to render homage to the Frankish king Baldwin, is asked to act as host to the Queen, who intends coming to Acre. Fearful lest his Christian captives be discovered, he decides to put them to death. The entreaties of Zuzima are powerless to influence the emir. Zuzima is made responsible for the prisoners' escape. She has Richard take the impression of the dungeon keys and make others like them, by which the men unlock the prison doors.

Miss Clark manages in a clever way for her heroine to be left behind. Zuzima feigns illness in order to get an opportunity to escape with Gilbert. But her father is more solicitous than she anticipated, and insists upon taking her on a journey to Herod's baths for her health and his own. While they are gone, the prisoners make their escape. On the way to the shore, Becket is wounded by an arrow from one of his pursuers, and Richard is so confounded that he can only bear the body of his master to the ship, without thought of Zuzima. Thus all are acquitted of blame. Kaibal, enraged because of Zuzima's refusal of the suit of Hateb, a Bedouin chief, becomes cruel to his daughter, and thus provides another incentive for her escape. Gilbert has purposed to return to Palestine to claim his bride, but a deception is practised upon him by some Hebrew fugitives who have known Zuzima and who convince Gilbert (at the request of his father) that she has proved faithless and married another. Zuzima reaches the house of Gilbert in London just at the time the wedding of Gilbert and a lady named Edith, the ward of the English king, is in progress. Zuzima very graciously offers to fare forth again, as Becket seems already provided for, but Gilbert will hear to nothing of the sort, and he dismisses the king's ward. Twenty years later, on her deathbed, Zuzima (or rather, Matilda) commands that a chapel be erected to mark the spot where her wanderings found an end.

The book contains no spark of poetry or suggestion of literary value. It is as dull as an eight-thousand-line "poem" could possibly be. The action is inconceivably slow, the scenes are lacking in vividness, and there is not a clearly drawn character in the tale. It is, one must admit, an encyclopedia of classical and Oriental myth. The notes are copious. Miss Clark has been influenced to some extent by the story of Esther, to whom she compares her heroine. Like the Hebrew queen, Zima spreads a banquet before her father, and reflects, "To-morrow will he bid me name my boon."[76]

It was inevitable that someone should treat the legend of Gilbert in a light and humorous manner. One such version is given in À Beckett's *Comic History.*[77] The author calls Gilbert the father of British commerce because his seems to be the first mercantile name on record. Just what was Gilbert's business in Palestine, he says, would be impossible to conjecture, but as it took him to camp, he may have been a dealer in camp stools or tent bedsteads. The daughter of the Mussulman effected the escape of Gilbert, but Gilbert in the excitement of his departure forgot to take the lady with him! The author imagines that Gilbert probably got half-way to London before he missed the faithful girl, and it would then have been imprudent to return to repair the oversight. She made the best of her way after him, and when she found Gilbert in London a frantic recognition occurred, after which they were promptly married.

A modern barrack-room version of the legend is given by one of the characters in a recent story by Percival Christopher Wren.[78] The narrator makes Thomas the hero instead of Gilbert, and supposes that he went back to England because his time of enlistment had expired or he had received a furlough. The Saracen girl is called Grace, Zuleika, Zenobia, or Aggie. Upon coming to London, according to this account, she took a boarding house in Bloomsbury, and although the only names she knew of the one she sought were Thomas, Tommy, and Tom, she finally succeeded, by means of the directory and visits to night clubs, in finding him. He, it is explained, was just having a last drink preparatory to setting out to look for her.

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[76] *Op. cit.*, p. 57.

[77] Gilbert Abbott À Beckett, *The Comic History of England* (London, 1855), I, 86.

[78] "What's in a Name?" *The Comopolitan*, July, 1928, p. 90.

It is evident that though the legend gained in detail through being retold, it did not gain in quality. Unquestionably, the highest point of its interest and human appeal is in the versions of the *South English Legendary*.[79] Unfortunately for tracing the development of the story, the legend is almost full-grown when we first encounter it. There are just enough loopholes left in the account given in the Quadrilogus to stimulate the imagination of the writers of the Middle Ages. How much more romantic to have Gilbert accept the proffered love of the Saracen maiden than to put her off from day to day. Furthermore, the account in the Quadrilogus does not tell how Gilbert made his escape, but we are told that the Saracen maiden loved him and was willing to renounce her faith if he would promise to marry her. How natural, then, for the story to develop that Gilbert accepted her love (as in the English versions of the *Legenda Aurea*), that she helped him to escape (as in the *Festial*), and then as opportunity offered, followed him to England. The vagueness of the description of the arrival of the Saracen Princess in England, and the apparent lack of hospitality on the part of Gilbert seem to call for correction, and the demands of vivid narrative as well as those of poetic justice are satisfied in the account of Add. MS. 11565.

The infra-literary nature of the modern accounts is quite obvious. They are interesting only because of their inconsistency, their attempts to make the story more plausible (which in most instances are hopelessly futile), or their absurdity. There is still opportunity for some author to put the story of the Saracen Princess into modern poetry or romance.

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[79] It would be hard to prefer one version to the other. MS. Laud 108 contains more vivid detail, but Ashmole 43 is interesting as the work of a man who can not keep his own feelings entirely out of his story. For example, after transforming into something of real beauty the exclamatory passage of the Quadrilogus concerning the bravery of the Saracen maiden, he adds, "Hou þinkeþ ȝou, nas heo hardi? Certes, me þenceþ, heo was!" (line 74).

## III

## THE LEGEND OF THE SARACEN PRINCESS—ORIGIN AND ANALOGUES

The phenomenon of such a picturesque and elaborate legend as that of the Saracen Princess associated with the name of a great historical character and growing up within a hundred years of the death of that character, is so interesting that it invites one to speculation concerning its origin. But in order to approach intelligently the problem of the source of the legend, it would be well to make a survey of analogues, in the hope of finding the origin either of the framework or of some details of the legend.

Parallels to the legend of Becket's Syrian mother may be found in medieval tales and poems, romance, and balladry. In some of these narratives, the parallel to our legend is striking; in others, only one or more motifs are held in common. For the sake of making as complete a survey as possible, and for the purpose of bringing together everything which might have a possible bearing upon the source of the legend, let us make a detailed study of stories which appear in any way similar. Inasmuch as the dates of many of these medieval pieces, especially the chansons de geste, are very uncertain, and as they seem unnecessary for the present purpose, no attempt will be made to ascertain the exact time of composition. It will be adequate to distinguish between the poems and stories that were sufficiently early to influence the legend in its early form, and those that were too late to do so, but may be mentioned because they illustrate the prevalence of the theme.

There are some resemblances to the legend in Tale 236 of the *Arabian Nights*.[1] In both stories the hero is imprisoned, and befriended by the daughter of his jailer, who falls in love with him. In both she inquires concerning the religion of the hero, and when it is expounded to her, expresses a desire to change her faith. In the tale of the *Arabian Nights*, she pronounces the two professions of the faith and becomes a Mohammedan. She gives the prisoner food and drink and finally releases him.

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[1] Trans. E. W. Lane (2nd ed., London, 1847), II, 115.

Some elements of the legend are to be found in the outline formulated by Seneca the Rhetorician in the heading of his sixth *controversia*.[2] A young man is captured by pirates and writes to his father for redemption, but is refused. The daughter of the pirate chief urges him to swear that he will marry her if she frees him. The youth complies with her request and returns with her to his father. The father orders the youth to dismiss the pirate's daughter and marry a certain orphan. The son refuses. The fundamentals of the story are retained, as Mr. Warren has noted,[3] in the fifth tale of the *Gesta Romanorum*,[4] though the orphan does not appear, and the heroine is a princess. The father still opposes his son's marriage with the girl, and threatens to disinherit him, but the father's objections are finally overcome. Warren also cites the Spanish *Infantes de Lara*. In this poem, a Christian is held prisoner by a Moslem, and visited by a Moorish princess. She falls in love with him and bears him a son, who avenges the wrongs suffered by his father.[5]

The Legend of Bohemond's Release, in Ordericus Vitalis presents a more striking parallel to the Legend of the Saracen Princess.[6] Bohemond, like Gilbert Becket, is captured and imprisioned by a Turkish emir. The emir, who is named Daliman, has a beautiful daughter, Melaz, who visits the prisoners in their dungeon and talks with them of the Christian faith. She brings the captives food and clothing and finally sets them free by arming them and suggesting that they overpower their jailers. She resolves to become a Christian, but there is no condition involved. Daliman, forced to make terms, agrees to give his daughter to Bohemond in marriage, but there is no indication that the offer is made at the instigation of Melaz. When the released captives depart from the palace, Daliman accompanies them, hoping to do them harm, but his plans, like those of the Saracen amiral in the legend of Becket, are frustrated. More significant still is the fact that Melaz follows the released prisoners and joins them at Bithia. Later, apparently when the group reaches Antioch, she is baptized. She does not marry Bohemond, however, for he persuades her to take some other noble for a husband, one whose future is not so closely interwoven with the fate of war. Furthermore, like Gilbert in some versions of the legend, Bohemond has made a vow during his captivity to undertake a pilgrimage—in this instance, to St. Leonard's in Aquitaine. It is perhaps merely a coincidence that the name of Bohemond's companion in captivity should be named Richard (de Principatu).

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[2] M. Annaei Senecae Rhetoris, *Suasoriae, Controversiae, Declamationumque Excerpta* (Amstelredami, 1628), p. 49. See also F. M. Warren, "The Enamoured Moslem Princess in Orderic Vital and the French Epic," *P. M. L. A.*, XXIX (1914), 346–7.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Trans. Charles Swan (revised by W. Hooper; London, 1905), pp. 8–10.

[5] Two versions of the Spanish legend are given in Gaston Paris, *Poèmes et Legendes du Moyen-Age* (Paris, 1900), pp. 215–251. In one version the princess is a sister of the jailer.

[6] *Historia Ecclesiastica*, X, 23 (ed. Société de l'Histoire de France, IV, 139–158); trans. Thomas Forester (London, 1854), III, 308–322.

In the twelfth century German poem, *Graf Rudolf*,[7] there are elements similar to those in the legend of Gilbert Becket. Here, too, the Christian hero is loved by the beautiful daughter of the heathen prince, but she does not take the initiative in love. The hero is imprisoned and escapes. Later, the former princess, now apparently a queen, is baptized and receives the name of Irmengart. There is a reunion of the lovers, and the queen flies with Rudolph, but there is no pursuit of the hero over land and sea.

Many chansons de geste parallel the Legend of the Saracen Princess in one or more particulars. In the Cycle of Charlemagne, at least six poems contain elements similar to those of our legend. In *Mainet*,[8] Charles is loved by the beautiful daughter of the pagan king of Toledo. Orionde Galienne openly announces that she would willingly marry the brave Frank. She has an opportunity of befriending him on two occasions, for her brother, Marsile, is jealous of the French warrior and conspires against him, but she reveals the plot, in the first instance to her father, in the second to friends of Charles. The *Charlemagne* of Girard d'Amiens[9] adds several details to the story. Galienne is baptized and married to Charles. After being separated from him for some time, she follows him to France, but dies shortly after her arrival in giving birth to a son. In *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*,[10] the daughter of Hugo, the pagan king, wishes to accompany Oliver, when the latter returns to France, but the friend of Roland repulses her harshly. In *Les Enfances Ogier*,[11] Gloriande, the daughter of the pagan Corsuble, saves the life of the Christian Ogier and prevails upon her father to imprison him in her own tent.[12]

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[7] *Grave Ruodolf*, ed. Wilhelm Grimm (Göttingen, 1828). See also Max Deutschbein, *Studien zur Sagengeschichte Englands* (Cöthen, 1906), pp. 191–3; J. Bethmann, "Untersuchungen über die mhd. Dichtung vom Grafen Rudolph," *Palaestra*, XXX (1904), pp. 87–89; S. Singer, "Graf Rudolph," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, XXX (1886), 379–389, and Von Sybel, "Über die Geschichtliche Grundlage des Grafen Rudolf," in the same journal, II (1842), 235–248.

[8] A. Keller, *Karl Meinet*, Bibl. des lit. Ver., XLV (1858); Gaston Paris, "Mainet," *Romania*, IV (1875), 305–337; analysis in Leon Gautier, *Les Épopées Françaises*, (2nd ed., Paris, 1881), III, 38–39. For various versions of the legend concerning the youth of Charlemagne, see Gaston Paris, *Histore Poétique de Charlemagne* (Paris, 1905), pp. 232–246.

In *Huon de Bordeaux*,[13] the French hero when in Babylon is surrounded by soldiers of the amiral Gaudisse, captured, and thrown into prison. There he is visited by the beautiful Esclarmonde, the amiral's daughter, who loves him and offers him liberty if he will marry her. Huon, like Gilbert, is reluctant to accept her proffered love, and tells her that he can never love her inasmuch as she is pagan. Three days of fasting which she imposes upon him in retaliation tend to modify his decision, and he finally declares himself ready to accede to her wishes. She, in turn, expresses her willingness to become a Christian, and sets about to deliver her lover from prison, and to accompany him in his flight. But Huon and Esclarmonde sin, and a heavy punishment falls upon them: after a storm at sea, they are captured by the Saracens and separated. Eventually there is a reunion; then Esclarmonde is baptized and married to Huon.

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[9] Analysis, Gautier, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–52.

[10] E. Koschwitz, *Karls des Grossen Reise nach Jerusalem und Constantinople* (Leipzig, 1913); analysis, *Les Épopées Françaises*, III, 314–15.

[11] Ed. Aug. Scheler (Bruxelles, 1874); analysis, Gautier, *Les Épopées Françaises*, III, 52–63.

[12] Lines 3091–3114.

[13] F. Guessard et Charles Grandmaison, *Huon de Bordeaux*, Paris, 1860 (*Les anciens poètes de la France*, IV); analysis, Gautier, *op. cit.*, III, 719–773.

In *Fierabras*,[14] likewise, there are several resemblances to the legend of Gilbert. Floripas, daughter of the amirant Balan and sister of Fierabras, brings Oliver and other French knights from their prison and conceals them in her own apartment. Then she reveals to them her love for Gui de Bourgogne, whom she has seen at Rome; she will marry no other, and for his love she will become Christian. Later, when Gui de Bourgogne, with Roland and Ogier, falls into the hands of the infidels, she promises to help the Christian knights if Gui will become betrothed to her. He hesitates, saying that he will take no wife unless she be given to him by Charlemagne. Finally, however, he yields to the threats of Floripas and the persuasions of Roland. At her suggestion the knights arm and make themselves masters of the palace. Eventually she is baptized and married to Gui.

The cycle of William of Orange presents even closer parallels to the legend of Gilbert. In *Les Enfances Garin*,[15] Savari is imprisoned by an Italian king, whose daughter Yvoire frees the prisoner for the love of his son Garin. Then she flees with Savari and Garin, taking her jewels with her. In *Hernant de Beaulande*,[16] the hero, a son of Garin de Montglane, is imprisoned by the pagan king Florent, is loved by the king's daughter, Fregonde, and by her aid and that of the giant Robastre, is set at liberty, and returns to France to seek aid against the heathen and to reclaim his rights as the ruler of Aquitaine. Fregonde, disguised as a man, follows him, bringing with her the brother and uncle of Hernant, whose services she has enlisted to aid her lover. Upon her arrival she is married to Hernant.

In *Guibert d'Andrenas*,[17] the beautiful Augaiete, the daughter of Judas, the pagan king of Andrenas, falls in love with Guibert, son of Aymeri, even before seeing him. When his father is a prisoner in the tower where Augaiete lives with her chambermaids, she conceives a plan for his release, which she communicates to the prisoner. Aymeri promises her that if her plan succeeds, he will give her his son in marriage and crown both of them sovereigns of Andrenas. She provides arms for him and bars all the doors of the tower from the inside, refusing to open them to her father. But as soon as the French army has made its way into the city, Aymeri opens the doors and joins in the fray. After the battle, Augaiete is baptized and married to Guibert.

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[14] Ed. A. Kroeber et G. Servois, Paris, 1860 (*Les Anciens Poètes de la France*, t. IV); analysis, Gautier, *op. cit.*, III, 381–397.

[15] Analysis, Gautier, *op. cit.*, IV, 121–2. This romance could not have influenced the legend of Becket, except in its later stages, as it is probably not earlier than the fifteenth century. (*Ibid.*, p. 106, note.)

[16] Analysis, Gautier, *op. cit.*, IV, 203–17.

[17] Ed. J. Melander (Paris, 1922); Jessie Crosland (Manchester and London, 1923).

In *La Prise de Cordres et de Sebille*,[18] Nubie, the daughter of Aumacor, the pagan king of Cordres, falls in love with the Christian captive, Bertram. She descends into the prison, and obtains Bertram's promise to take her for wife if she will effect his release. Then she sends him food, drink, and weapons. The Saracens hold a great feast, and Nubie persuades her father to allow her to serve the meal alone. She mixes in the wine a powerful sleeping draught and plunges the whole palace into a deep sleep. Then she collects as much gold and as many clothes as she can take with her, and flees with Bertram and his companions. Finally, after being baptized, she is married to Bertram.

Again, the beautiful Malatrie, daughter of the emir of Cordove in *Le Siège de Barbastre*,[19] falls in love with the Christian Girart de Comarchis. After Girart has overthrown Libanor, to whom Malatrie is betrothed, and has presented to her the horse of his vanquished foe, Malatrie asks Girart's name and offers him twenty-five cities if he will carry her away. Just then they are surprised and Malatrie is captured by her own people. Later she summons Girart to a rendezvous, and in the mêlée which follows discovery by the Saracens she allows herself to be captured by the Christians and brought to Barbastre. When peace is made, she is baptized and married to her lover.

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[18] Ed. Ovide Densusianu (Paris, 1896). Analysis, Max Rhode, "La Prise de Cordres," *Romanische Forschungen*, VI (1888), 61–69.

[19] Analysis, Ph. Aug. Becker, "Der Siège de Barbastre," in *Festgabe für Gustav Gröber* (Halle, 1899), pp. 252–266. Brief summary, *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, XX (1842), 706–10. See also *Beuves de Commarcis par Adenes li Rois*, ed. Aug. Scheler (Bruxelles, 1874), which is a treatment of the same material.

In the same poem, Almarinde, the daughter of the heathen Fabur, falls in love with the Christian Guibert by hearsay, and invites him and some companions to a rendezvous at which her cousins Alfanie and Blanchardine are present. When the patrol discovers the horses and gives the alarm, Almarinde swears that she will not leave Guibert. They flee, but in the strife they become separated and she is captured by the heathens. After peace is made, she is married to Guibert.

In *Les Enfances Guillaume*,[20] the lovely Orable, sister of the pagan Clariel, falls in love with William of Orange by hearsay, saves his life when her brother plans to surprise the Christian army with a force of five thousand men, and sends him word that she will be baptized if he wishes to marry her.

In the *Prise d'Orange*,[21] William, who can no longer be happy without seeing Orable, visits with two companions the castle of Gloriette, but the three Frenchmen are captured by forces of the king of Arragon, who is in charge of the city and who has discovered their identity. They are saved by the queen Orable, who demands charge of the men that she may cast them into her prisons, which, she says, are full of snakes. Then she descends to their dungeon and announces that she is ready to deliver them and willing to become a Christian on condition that William will promise to marry her. He promises, and she effects the release. Bertrand, a companion of William, goes to Nimes for aid, and an army of thirteen thousand Frenchmen arrive at Orange via a subterranean passageway and take the city. Orable is baptized, given the name of Guiberc, and married to William.

In *Foulque de Candie*,[22] the beautiful Anfelise, daughter of the Saracen emir of Candie, falls in love with Foulque, by whom she is taken prisoner. Eventually she is baptized and married to him.

But the romance which parallels the legend of Gilbert most closely is *Bevis of Hamtoun*.[23] Many resemblances may be enumerated: (1) Both heroes are held in captivity by an Eastern prince, in the legend an Admiral, in the romance King Ermin of Armenia. (2) Each hero gains the special favor of his master. (3) Each master has a beautiful and only daughter. (4) In each story the hero is interrogated about his native country. (5) Bevis, like Gilbert, is befriended by his master's daughter, though in a very different way. Bevis has encountered the king's anger because he has killed a company of Saracen knights. The king swears that Bevis shall die for the deed, but Josian intercedes for him. The king is pacified, and his daughter ministers to the needs of Bevis, who has been wounded in the fight. (6) In each story, the master's daughter falls in love with the hero and tells him of her love. (7) Both heroes are at first reluctant to accept the proposal. Bevis protests that his servile position disqualifies him to become the husband of one of such high rank. (8) In each story the heroine promises to become a Christian if the hero will accept her as his wife. This inducement proves too strong for Bevis, and they kiss in token of betrothal. (9) Bevis after seven years escapes from his prison and goes to Jerusalem; Gilbert escapes in less time and goes to London. (10) Bevis seeks counsel from the Patriarch of Jerusalem, just as Gilbert consults the Bishop of London. (11) Josian is baptized in preparation for her union with Bevis, just as the Saracen princess in the legend is baptized in order to become the wife of Gilbert. (12) Josian goes in search of her husband along with Saber and twelve knights. This is the closest approach to the adventure of the princess in the legend, who came over land and sea to seek her lover in London. (13) Finally, Bevis and Josian are married in England by the Bishop of Cologne, as Gilbert and the Saracen maiden are married in London at St. Paul's.

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[20] Trans. W. J. A. Jonckbloet (Amsterdam, 1867). Analysis, Gautier, *op. cit.*, IV, 276–308.

[21] Trans. W. J. A. Jonckbloet, *Guillaume d'Orange* (La Haye, 1854), I, 113–162; II, 237–239. Analysis, Gautier, *op. cit.*, IV, 392–409.

[22] Ed. Prosper Tarbé (Reims, 1860). Analysis, Gautier, *op. cit.*, IV, 43; *Histoire Littéraire*, XXII, 545.

[23] Ed. Eugen Kölbing, E. E. T. S., E. S. XLVI, XLVIII, and LXV.

Several other romances may be cited that bear some resemblance, at least in part, to the legend of Gilbert. In *Elie de Saint Gille*,[24] the hero is captured by Saracens who have invaded Brittany, and is carried away to their own country. Because Elie will not worship Mahomet, the amiral Macabre condemns him to the gallows. Elie, like Gilbert, manages to escape from his prison. The amiral's daughter, as in the legend, falls in love with the hero and befriends him, but in a different way, for he is wounded in a fight before the Saracen's castle, and by her nursed back to health. Rosamund, like the heroine of the legend, is eventually baptized, preparatory to her marriage with the hero, but the archbishop is skeptical about her intentions, and there is no Bishop of Chichester to plead her cause. According to the English account the marriage is prevented, but Child mentions a Norse version of the story, in which it is allowed to reach a happy ending.[25] Hippeau,[26] who first cited this romance as a parallel to the Becket legend, calls attention to the similarity of the name of Rosemonde to Roesa, which is applied by one biographer to the mother of Thomas, and also to the likeness between Giles and Gilbert. In *Aiol*,[27] the hero, who is the son of Elie de Saint-Gille, kidnaps the princess Mirabel, daughter of the king of Spain, brings her to France, where after she has been baptized, he marries her.

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[24] Ed. Gaston Raynaud, Paris, 1879 (*Société des Anciens Textes*).

The romance of *King Horn*[28] has several elements in common with the legend. The hero, in exile from his native land, is in great favor with the king and is loved by the king's daughter. Rymenhild, the princess, begs Horn to plight her his troth, but he puts her off, insisting that his lowly birth and station make him an unsuitable mate for her. Finally, however, they are betrothed. After seven years of adventures which have no parallel in the story of Gilbert, the lovers are happily married. In *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*,[29] as a result of a false accusation against Horn and Rimnild, the hero's death is decreed. He escapes, but not until the lovers have pledged seven years of fidelity.

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[25] Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Cambridge, 1884), I, 458, note.

[26] *Vie de St. Thomas par Garnier de Pont Sainte Maxence*, ed. C. Hippeau (1859), p. XXIII.

[27] Ed. Jacques Normand et Gaston Raynaud, Paris, 1877 (*Société des Anciens Textes françaises*); W. Foerster, *Aiol et Mirabel* (Heilbronn, 1876–82). Analysis, *Histoire Littéraire*, XX, 274–288.

[28] Ed. Joseph Hall (Oxford, 1901). See also F. J. Child, *op. cit.* I, 188–193.

[29] Ed. F. Michel (Paris, 1845). Cf. Child, *op. cit.*, I, 191–2.

In *Orson de Beauvais,*[30] Guinemand and Milon are befriended by the wife of their jailer; she brings them food and during the following night releases them. In *Daurel et Beton,*[31] Beton, the nephew of Charlemagne, promises to marry Erimine, the daughter of the emir of Babylon, if she will be baptized. The young lady consents. In *Aspremont,*[32] Aufelise, the wife of the Saracen king, Agolant, becomes enamoured of the Christian duke Naime, and makes advances to him. Later, after a battle in which the French are victorious and her husband is killed, she is baptized, and according to the order of Charlemagne, married to Florent, the son of the King of Hungary.

In *Gaufrey,*[33] Fleurdépine, the daughter of the king Macabre of Hungary, falls in love with Berart de Montdidier by hearsay, and promises Doon de Maience and Garin de Montglane, who have been captured by the Saracens and shut up in the tower of Barbel, that she will deliver them from prison and will accept Christianity if they will conduct her to Berart. Soon afterward Berart himself falls into the hands of the Saracens and is placed in the prison where the other two Frenchmen are confined, and Fleurdépine has the opportunity of declaring her love to him in person. Through a strategem of the princess, the Frenchmen receive arms and gain possession of the tower; Fleurdépine is baptized and married to Berart.

In *Floovant,*[34] the beautiful Maugalie, daughter of the amiral, Galien, falls in love at first sight with Floovant, the eldest son of Clovis, and when he has fallen into the power of the Saracens, and Galien has ordered his execution, Maugalie succeeds in getting the execution delayed. The amiral throws him into a dungeon filled with poisonous snakes. Maugalie sends Floovant word that she is willing to renounce her religion if he will take her as his wife. When his promise has been given, she procures arms for Floovant and his companions (several other French captives have by this time been thrown into the prison), and accompanies them when, after attacking the Saracens, the prisoners escape. Her father makes a fruitless pursuit of the fugitives. After they have returned to Christian territory, Maugalie is baptized and married to Floovant.

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[30] Ed. G. Paris (Paris, 1899).

[31] Ed. Paul Meyer, Paris, 1880 (*Société des Anciens Textes Françaises*).

[32] Ed. Francis Guessard et Leon Gautier (Paris, 1855). Analysis, *Histoire Littéraire,* XXII, 306–8. Modernized version, Louis Brandin, *La Chanson d'Aspremont* (Paris, 1925).

[33] Ed. Francis Guessard et P. Chabaille, Paris, 1859 (*Les Anciens Poètes de la France,* t. III). Analysis, *Histoire Littéraire,* XXVI, 191–212.

[34] Ed. F. Guessard et H. Michelant, Paris, 1859 (*Les Anciens Poètes de la France,* t. I.). Analysis, *Histoire Littéraire,* XXVI, 1–19.

Three episodes of the romance, *Florent et Octavian*,[35] parallel to some extent portions of the legend of Gilbert. The beautiful Marsebille, daughter of the soudan of Babylon, loves Florent, who announces on first seeing her that he wishes to convert her and marry her. He visits Marsebille in disguise and defeats the best Saracen knights in combat, but his plan to carry her away is defeated. She then takes the matter in her own hands. Disguised as a man, she makes her way to Paris, and seeks out the house of Maître Clement, where she finds her lover. But soon afterward, Florent is captured by the Saracens and taken to Rome, and she has once more to go in search of her fiancé. She finds him, eventually, in Babylon, where his brother is ruling, and this time she is married to her dear Florent. In the episode of Octavian and Margalie, the former disguised as a minstral, visits Margalie, the daughter of the soudan of Babylon, and declares his intention of converting and marrying her. The conversation is rudely terminated by the arrival of Malaquin, uncle and guardian of the princess, who withdraws his charge, and leaves Octavian a prisoner in the castle. A young lady in the service of the princess is inadvertently left behind, and proceeds to console the prisoner and effect his release. Shortly afterward Acarius, the soudan of Babylon, is defeated, accepts Christianity, and consents to the marriage of Octavian and Margalie. In a third episode, Florent seeking for adventure, decides to visit his brother Octavian in Babylon. He is made prisoner by the Saracens, who conduct him to the king of Palerne. During his captivity the beautiful Police, daughter of the king, ministers to him. Finally, after being transferred to a prison in Aumarie, he is released by his wife, Marsebille. Police, who could not be rewarded in the ordinary manner by the hand of the knight she had befriended, marries instead his son, Othenet, who has grown up at the court of the King of Palerne. When her husband, ignorant of his Christian ancestry, has been defeated and captured by the Christians, she is brought to Rome, where she is baptized, and she experiences some embarrassment upon recognizing in Florent not only the father of her husband but the prisoner she had once befriended.

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[35] Abridged version in Karl Vollmoeller, *Octavian* (Heilbroun, 1883), *Altfranzösische Bibliothek*, hrsg. von Wendelin Foerster, Band III. Analysis, *Histoire Littéraire*, XXVI, 303–335.

Two romances may be mentioned because of the heroine's pursuit of her lover over land and sea. In *Galerent*,[36] when Frêne learns that her lover is to be married to some one else, she can not resist seeing him once more before she takes the veil. She arrives on the day before his marriage, disguised as a minstrel, but is recognized by the beautiful drapery which covers her shoulders, and finally marries Galerent. In *Aucassin and Nicolette*,[37] the daughter of the King of Carthage, after being captured by Saracens and separated from her lover, disguises herself as a harper, and journeys from her father's realm to Biaucaire, where she is united to Aucassin.

An incident of *Guy of Warwick*[38] reminds one of the last part of the legend of Gilbert. Shortly after the marriage of Guy with Felice, he vows to expiate his sins as a pilgrim, and leaving his wife with child, he goes to the East.[39] A similar situation is found in *Emare*, [40] a Breton lai, where the King of Galys goes to fight against the Saracens, leaving his wife with child.

Several later romances may be mentioned which, if they could not have influenced the legend of Gilbert in its earliest form, may still illustrate the prevalence of the theme. When Ernout de Beauvais, king of Nimaie, in *Baudouin de Sebourg*,[41] is captured by Saracens, with his companions, he is conducted to Abilant, and entrusted to the care of the beautiful Elienor, sister of the king of Persia. She, secretly a Christian, treats the captive kindly. He expresses to her the wish that she were in his realm with him, that she might be baptized and married to his son, Esmeré. She tells him that if he will bring about such an event, she will deliver him from prison. The king promises on that condition to give her his son. Shortly afterward Ernout is promised freedom by the king of Persia in reward for his services against the enemies of Persia, but is killed by the bite of a serpent when he is on a mission for the king. Elienor forms a plan to accomplish her wishes alone. She has a painter portray on a cloth of gold the whole story of King Ernout. Disguised as a merchant, she voyages to France, bearing with her many treasures, as well as the cloth of gold. Her beauty and treasure cause her to be the subject of plots, but she frustrates the designs against her, finds Esmeré, and is married to him.

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[36] Ed. Anatole Boucherie (Montpellier et Paris, 1888).

[37] Ed. Hermann Suchier (9th ed., revised by Walther Suchier, Paderborn, 1921).

[38] Ed. Julius Zupitza, E. E. T. S., E. S. XXV, XXVI.

[39] This parallel is cited by Irene Pettit McKeehan, *Some Relationships between the Medieval Legends of British Saints and Medieval Romance* (MS. Dissertation, Chicago, 1923), pp. 144–5. A summary of the thesis is published in *Abstracts of Theses, Humanistic Series*, Vol. II (Chicago, 1926). She assigns this section of both stories to a hagiographic rather than a romantic origin, in view of the marked resemblance which the latter part of Guy's life presents with that of St. Alexis.

[40] Ed. Edith Rickert (Chicago, 1907).

[41] Ed. M. L. Boca (Valenciennes, 1841).

In *Le Bastars de Buillon*,[42] Sinamonde, sister of Sadoine, one of the five sovereigns of Egypt, becomes enamoured by hearsay of Baudouin, king of Jersualem. She sends a message to him offering him her love and hand if he will renounce Christ. Later, she has the opportunity to plead her cause in person, and when Baudouin protests that her religion is a barrier, she informs him that she is a Saracen only in appearance, that at heart she is Christian. The king finally yields to her overtures. In *Ciperis de Vignevaux*,[43] Salatrie, daughter of the Saracen king, Aquilant, expresses the desire to become a Christian and marry a son of Ciperis; eventually she accomplishes her wish. In *Valentin and Orson*,[44] Valentin loves a Saracen, Clerimond, the sister of the Green Knight, and promises to marry her if she will forsake Mohammed. To this condition she readily agrees. In *Generydes*,[45] Sereyne, the daughter of the King of Syria, takes the initiative in a love affair with Auferius, the King of India. Later when she becomes queen, she hears that the king of India has been exiled from his country, goes in search of him, finds him established as the governor of a city in Thrace, and marries him. Generydes, the son of Auferius and Sereyne, falls in love with Clarionas, the daughter of Goffore, the Sultan of Persia. Later, learning that her lover is ill in Syria, Clarionas goes to Damascus in disguise, visits her lover, and reveals herself to him. Finally, in *Ysaie le Triste,*[46] Martha, the niece of King Irion, takes the initiative in a love affair with Ysaie, and after giving birth to a son, sets out in quest of him, disguised as a minstral, and after many adventures is restored to Ysaie and married to him. In the same romance, Marc, the son of Ysaie, after defeating the army of the Amiral of Persia, discovers the beauriful Orimonda, daughter of the Amiral, baptizes her, and marries her.

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[42] Ed. Auguste Scheler (Bruxelles, 1877). Analysis, *Histoire Littéraire*, XXV, 593–618.

[43] Analysis, *Histoire Littéraire*, XXVI, 19–40.

[44] Trans. S. R. Littleton; also under the title, *The Famous History of Valentine and Orson*, London, 1826 (*Dove's English Classics*). Analysis, W. Seelman, *Valentin und Namelos* (1884).

[45] Ed. A. Wright, E. E. T. S., O. S., 55, 70.

There are many resemblances between the Legend of the Saracen Princess and the ballad variously known as Lord *Bateman, Lord Beichen, Young Beichen and Susie Pye, Young Bekie, Young Bondwell,* and *Earl Bichet.*[47] (1) The names *Bekie, Beichan,* and *Bichet* are very close to *Becket.* (2) Beichan, in most of the versions of the ballad, like Thomas Becket, is born in London.[48] (3) In two versions[49] Beichan goes to the Holy Land, but according to another he goes only to France, and in others he merely goes abroad. (4) Beichan becomes the slave of a Moor or a Turk (7 versions), who treats him cruelly because he is a Christian. He is cast into a dungeon, where he almost perishes from hunger.[50] (5) The master has a lovely daughter, who becomes interested in the captive. (6) The only daughter of the Moor, Turk, or king proposes marriage to the hero, but there are some radical differences between the proposal of the ballads and that of the legend. In the ballads nothing is said about religion, and the young lady seems primarily interested in the ample estates of Beichan. (7) She delivers him from prison upon the understanding that they are to marry within seven years.[51] (8) The hero of the ballad, like Gilbert, goes home and forgets the woman that he left in the foreign land. (9) Finally Susie Pye, like the heroine of the legend, decides to go in search of her lover. Here enter several elements varying from the legend. In two versions Isbel (instead of Susie Pye) is warned by the Billy Blin or, in the other version, by a fairy woman in green, that that very day is Bekie's (or Bondwell's) wedding day. She attires herself splendidly and is miraculously conveyed to England. (10) In all of the ballad versions, as in Bodleian MS. 14716 of the *South English Legendary*, the heroine arrives at the hero's hall to find a wedding in progress. (11) The porter, like Gilbert's servant, informs his master of the presence of the beautiful lady without. Unlike Richard, he does not identify her, but describes her as the fairest and richest lady that he ever saw. (12) In spite of all obstacles, Susie Pye is married to Beichan, after she has been baptized.[52] (13) The name which she receives at baptism, Lady Jean, recalls that assumed by the Saracen maiden ("Jone") in Bodleian MS. 14716.

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[46] Analysis, John Dunlop, *History of Prose Fiction* (London, 1888), I, 212-222.

[47] F. J. Child, *op. cit.,* I, 451ff., prints fourteen versions of this ballad.

[48] Child observes that five versions "set out rather formally with the announcement that Bekie was London born, like the Latin biographies and the versified one of Garnier de Pont de Sainte Maxence." *Op. cit.,* p. 458. But notice that the accounts of the legend (with the exception of the anonymous English translation of *Legenda Aurea;* see Appendix C) do not say that *Gilbert* was born in London.

[49] One of these versions is printed in Child, *op. cit.,* IV, 460.

[50] Cf. especially the English translation of *Legenda Aurea,* above, p. 36 and Appendix C.

With this survey of parallels in mind, we may consider the theories which have been suggested for the origin of the Legend of the Saracen Princess.

(1) Miss Kate Norgate thinks that "such a legend is perhaps more likely to have been invented in Palestine than in Europe,"[53] and suggests that it may have been connected with the origin of

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[51] Cf. *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, above, p. 59, *Bevis of Hamtoun*, p. 58, and a modern version of the legend, above, p. 41.

[52] F. J. Child (*op. cit.*, p. 459) shows that ballads of the general cast of *Young Beichan* are extremely frequent. "Bekie and Beket go to the East, like Henry and Reinfrit of Brunswick, the noble Moringer, the good Gerhard, Messer Torello, the Sire de Crequi, Alexander of Metz, and others. Like the larger part of these, they are made prisoners by the Saracens. . . . He (Bekie) will not bow the knee to Mahound; neither will the Sire de Crequi, though he die for it . . . Henry of Brunswick is set free by a 'heathen' lady in the Danish ballad." For a summary of the parallels to the Legend of the Saracen Princess and the motifs involved, see Appendix D.

[53] *D. N. B.*, article "Thomas à Becket."

the military order of St. Thomas Acrensis, which was founded in the Holy Land within a few years of the martyrdom. W. H. Hutton, too, thinks "it is not unlikely that the curious legend of the Saracen mother . . . may have found its origin in this connection."[54]

Unfortunately there is very little definitely known concerning the origin of the Knights of St. Thomas of Acre. The theories and evidence may be summarized as follows:[55] (a) John Watney suggests that the foundation of the order may be connected with the penitential vow of Henry II to go for three years on a crusade, and to maintain 200 knights in Palestine, who were to be regulated by the customs of the Templars. (b) The origin has been attributed to William, the chaplain of Ralph de Diceto, who when the city of Acon was besieged by the Christians, vowed that if he should prosperously enter Acon he would build a chapel to St. Thomas the Martyr. (c) Matthew Paris[56] records that when Richard I was on his expedition to the Holy Land in 1190, he was saved from shipwreck by an apparition of Thomas Becket, and that some citizens of London who were on the ship founded a hospital the following year at Acre, after that city had been taken. (d) *The Theatre of Honour*[57] says that the order was instituted by Richard I after the surprisal of Acre, with Thomas Becket as its patron. Conflicting as these theories are, three out of the four agree that the establishment of the order was connected with the capture of Acon. Certainly the belief that the capture of Acon (or Acre) was effected through the interposition of Thomas was responsible for the appellation of St. Thomas of Acon.

Now the fact of Becket's being called St. Thomas of Acon is sufficient to encourage the myth-making tendency. There is ample proof of this statement in the errors of modern writers. Knight and Jortin say that Becket was called Thomas Acrensis because "that prelate was born in the parish of St. Thomas de

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[54] *Thomas Becket* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 284.

[55] All of these theories may be found in John Watney, *Some Account of the Hospital of St. Thomas of Acon* (London, 1892), pp. 1–3.

[56] P. 437, cited in Watney, *loc. cit.*

[57] Lib. 9, cap. 11, quoted in Watney, *loc. cit.*

Acres, in the city of London."[58] J. G. Nichols dismisses this theory on the ground that there never was any parish so called, and makes a worse blunder by saying that "from his being called Acrensis," the birth of Becket "would seem to have been at Acre, in the Holy Land."[59] Thornbury accounts for the name by saying that Becket's mother was born at Acre.[60] If in the light of modern investigation it is possible to make such errors as these, there is at least a possibility that men in the thirteenth century may have accounted for Becket's connection with Palestine in a similar way.[61] The foundation of the military order, the building of a chapel or hospital dedicated to Thomas in the Holy Land, and the dedication of a hospital in Cheapside on the site of his birthplace to Thomas Acrensis, events which seem to have occurred about the same time whether or not they are mutually related, were sufficient to keep the new name of the saint before the people.

(2) Another suggestion to account for the origin of the Legend of the Saracen Princess is offered by E. A. Abbott.[62] He recalls that the writer in the Late Quadrilogus says he relates the story

> in order that the wonderful predestination of the Savior may hence be perceived, so carefully and so mercifully bringing together the parents *from the East and from the West*, and from such diverse conditions of birth and circumstance.[63]

He compares this statement with the reasons which led Benedict to close his book of miracles with one from the extreme East and one from the extreme West, and concludes that the myth may have sprung simply from a sense of the fitness of things. It must be confessed that this suggestion does not throw very much light on the matter.

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[58] Samuel Knight, *The Life of Erasmus* (n. d.), p. 245; John Jortin, *The Life of Erasmus* (London, 1808), I, 33.

[59] D. Erasmus, *Pilgrimages to Saint Mary of Walsingham and St. Thomas of Canterbury*, trans. (with introduction and notes) by John Gough Nichols (2nd ed., London, 1875), p. 125.

[60] George Walter Thornbury (and Edward Walford), *Old and New London* (London; n. d.), I, 377. Thomas Allen, in *History and Antiquities of London, continued to the present time by Thomas Wright* (London, 1839), II, 341, also refers to "the archbishop (afterward called Thomas of Acons, or Acres, the ancient Ptolemais, from the presumed birth-place of his mother)."

[61] R. M. Clay, in *The Mediaeval Hospitals of England* (London, 1909), p. 266, mentions a belief with regard to the foundation of St. Thomas of Acon in London, that the designation had at first no connection with Acres, but rather with the original owner of the property. I presume this is the same theory as that of Knight.

[62] *St. Thomas of Canterbury, His Death and Miracles* (London, 1898), II, 289.

[63] Abbott's translation.

(3) Abbott also suggests that the myth may have been due to a mistaken rendering of some French tradition about St. Thomas the Apostle, or at least may have been encouraged by such a linguistic error. Garnier calls St. Thomas the Apostle "li pareins" of St. Thomas the Martyr, and says that the former is the patron of the East and the latter the patron of the West. Abbott concludes, "If 'pareins' were interpreted as 'parent', this might give rise to a story that a 'parent' of St. Thomas was connected with the East."[64] Although such an explanation is not absolutely impossible, it will have to be dismissed for lack of evidence.

(4) Hippeau reaches another conclusion:

> Le fait est que l'on a attribué à la mere de saint Thomas Becket, pour jeter plus de merveilleux sur sa naissance, une de ces aventures dont le recit se trouve reproduit avec des variantes plus ou moins heureuses dans un assez grand nombre de chansons de Geste, et particulièrement dans celles qui appartiennent au *Cycle* du celèbre Guillaume d'Orange.[65]

This explanation, that the story was transferred, in general outlines at least, from one hero (or heroine) to another, is favored by the fact that the legend is found in such a fully developed state within a century after the death of Becket. Furthermore, to attribute to the mother of Becket such an adventure as that given in the Legend of the Saracen Princess seems to be consistent with the methods used in the Middle Ages for supplying accretions to the lives of the saints. B. M. Ranking[66] shows how a story related of St. Eustace, a Roman martyr of the second century, was told as affecting the life of St. Hubert, who died in 727. He suspects "that some monkish historian, touched by the beauty of the story, engrafted it upon the more genuine acts of the good bishop."

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[64] *Loc. cit.*

[65] *Vie de St. Thomas par Garnier de Pont Sainte Maxence*, ed. C. Hippeau (1859), p. xxiii.

[66] B. Montgomerie Ranking, *Streams from Hidden Sources* (2nd ed., London, 1872), pp. 60–71.

(5) Miss McKeehan finds the source of the legend in *Bevis of Hamtoun*. "That this story came from the romance of *Bevis of Hamtoun* or from the tradition which grew into or is embedded in *Beves of Hamtoun* seems evident."[67] It may be admitted at once that the list of similar details in the legend and the romance is a formidable one, and the fact that just as long a list of differences between the two could easily be prepared does not destroy its value. This romance probably parallels the legend more closely than any other possible source that has been considered, though some of the details of the romance occur only in late versions of the legend. And yet the fact that this is not the *only* striking parallel must not be lost sight of. One might, for example, by forgetting about Bevis, make out a fairly good case for *Elie de Saint Gille* as the source of the legend. If a comparative study of the legend and the romance leads one to accept the statement of Miss McKeehan quoted above, then it seems safer to assume that both are products of a common tradition, than that *Bevis of Hamtoun* is solely responsible for the legend.[68]

It will be recalled that in the romance of *Richard Coer de Lyon*[69] Henry the Second is provided with an Oriental wife, the daughter of the King of Antioch. Could it be that the association of a Saracen princess with the name of Becket was suggested by this addition to the legendary biography of his rival? It certainly would not do to have the figure of Becket overshadowed in legend and romance by that of his opponent. It was impossible, of course, to provide Thomas Becket, the archbishop, with a Saracen wife, and the next best thing was to furnish him with an Oriental mother. The idea can be no more than speculation, and yet it is not impossible that it may have something to do with the origin of the legend.

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[67] I. P. McKeehan, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[68] C. H. Vellacott, in "Kinsfolk of St. Thomas of Canterbury," *Dublin Review*, CLXVIII (1921), 54, says it has been suggested that the story may have arisen from some episode in the life of Gilbert Becket's father. This theory is, of course, pure speculation, for nothing is known concerning any incident which could have given rise to the legend.

[69] Ed. Karl Brunner, "Die Me. Versroman über Richard Lowenherz," *Wiener Beiträge zur englischen Philologie*, XLII (1913).

A consideration of the analogues to the Legend of the Saracen Princess and the theories which have been suggested to explain its origin, leads to the following conclusions:

(1) The legend makes use of stock motifs, of which the most important are: the Christian hero held in captivity by a Saracen prince, the Saracen heroine offering to free the prisoner and accept his religion if he will agree to marry her, and the pursuit of the hero by the Oriental heroine over land and sea.

(2) Inasmuch as so many stories have in common one or more of these important motifs, and *no one story contains all three of them*, it is impossible to fasten upon any one of the analogues as the source of the legend of Gilbert. Even *Bevis*, which, as we have seen, affords perhaps the closest parallel, lacks the pursuit of the lover over land and sea by the heroine. Furthermore, the imprisonment of Bevis does not occur until after Josian has declared her love for him, and consequently she can extend to him no offer to free him from prison.

(3) After making due allowance for accidental resemblances in the medieval tales, romances, and ballads that have been considered, one may yet conclude that many of them are connected in origin as products of popular imagination. It is hardly probable that all the stories, having so many similarities, could have grown up independently.

(4) We must have, then, in the legend of Gilbert, a theme of popular story, manifested with variations in medieval tales, romance, and balladry.

(5) The connection of such a story with Becket is not an unusual or radical occurrence in the Middle Ages, but is in conformity with the ordinary accretion of legends about a popular hero.

(6) The association of a Saracen mother with Becket in legend and of an Oriental wife with King Henry may not be altogether a coincidence.

(7) Medieval tales and romances may be responsible for some of the later additions to the legend. For example, in the tale of the *Arabian Nights*, Seneca's *Sixth Controversia*, the fifth tale of the

*Gesta Romanorum*, the legend of Bohemond's Release in Ordericus Vitalis, *Huon de Bordeau*, *Fierabras*, *Prise d'Orange*, and other romances, the Eastern maiden helps the hero to escape from his prison. This detail occurs first in the Becket legend in Mirk's *Festial* (ca. 1415). In view of the popularity of tales and romances, especially the *Gesta Romanorum*, at this time, it seems possible that the detail may have been introduced into the legend, from such a source. In fact, the modern versions of the legend seem to have drawn from all possible sources. Isabella Golding Clark[70] mentions the ballads as one of her sources; in the account in *Fraser's Magazine*,[71] as in *Elie de Saint Gille*, the captor tries to persuade the hero to turn heathen, and on the refusal of the latter, the chief decrees the prisoner's death; the seven-year vow of the lovers, mentioned in a French life,[72] is duplicated in *Horn Child and Maiden Rimnild;* and the common detail that the hero accepted the proposal of the Eastern maiden is paralleled in at least eleven possible sources.[73]

One problem remains. If the legend of Becket's Syrian Mother illustrates the transference and transformation of a popular story, how did it come to be associated with the Archbishop of Canterbury? Miss McKeehan offers three solutions to account for the presence of the story in the legend:

(1) "The story was deliberately utilized by some hagiographer for the purpose of embellishing the rather tame account of his hero's origin. This theory is incapable of refutation and not in itself improbable."[74] The explanation is really Hippeau's theory in different words, and is as near as anyone has come to a satisfactory solution of the problem.

(2) "A story connected with the semi-historical Bevis was transferred by popular tradition to the historical figure of Thomas, who resembled Bevis in being a persecuted exile." Miss McKeehan admits that although this explanation would be credible if the transfer were of a mere anecdote or episode,

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[70] See above, p. 47 ff.
[71] See above, p. 45.
[72] See above, p. 41.
[73] See Appendix D.
[74] *Abstracts of Theses, Humanistic Series*, Vol. II (Chicago, 1926), pp. 388–9.

it is hardly applicable to an elaborate fictitious tale of Becket's parentage.

(3) "The story may have been originally told as an *exemplum* in a homily on St. Thomas."

> In contemporary biographies of Becket, especially in the *Vita* by William of Canterbury, emphasis is placed on the saint's reluctance to accept the archbishopric and on the way in which the sacred office pursued and forced itself upon him. To "exemplify" such a theme, the story of the importunate love of the Saracen maiden and her pursuit of her fugitive lover would be very appropriate. If the tale came into the legend first as an *exemplum* and was afterwards transformed into an integral part of the narrative, two peculiarities would be accounted for: (a) the emphasis on the love motive, exceedingly rare without reprobation in a saint's legend, and (b) the emphasis on Gilbert's reluctance.

But, curiously enough, in the existing homilies, with the exception of Mirk's *Festial*, the Legend of the Saracen Princess does not enter at all. In the North English Homily Collection, though the dreams of the mother of Thomas form a favorite subject, this legend is lacking. The theory is ingenious, but unsubstantiated, and is offered only as conjecture.

The resemblance between the legend of Becket's Saracen mother and the Bekie ballad has long been recognized and has served to convince most writers on the subject that the ballad was simply a variation of the Becket legend. One editor of Scottish ballads, in a delightfully naïve explanation, identifies the hero of the ballad with the father of Thomas Becket, and then remarks that he had accompanied Richard Coeur de Lion to the Holy Wars, thus happily bridging at least seventy-five years![75] Another writer thinks that the title of Susy Pie was perhaps a vulgarism of the original Eastern name of the Saracen Princess.[76]

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[75] "Young Bekie should be spelled Young Becket. The hero was no less a personage than the father of the celebrated Thomas à Becket, and it would appear that the ballad is, upon the whole, a faithful history of the captivity, sufferings, and subsequent marriage of that individual. He had accompanied Richard Coeur de Lion to the Holy Wars, out of motives of piety." Robert Chambers, *The Scottish Ballads* (Edinburgh, 1829), p. 103. Froude remarks, "In Saxon it (Becket's name) would have been Beckie." *Remains of the late Richard Hurrell Froude*, Part II, Vol. II, p. 32, note 2.

Child shows that although it is likely that the ballad was affected by the legend of Gilbert Becket, it was not derived from that source.[77]

> Stories and ballads of the general cast of "Young Beichan" are extremely frequent. The legend lacks some of the main points of these stories, and the ballad, in one version or another, has them.[78]

Norse, Spanish, and Italian ballads, he says, preserve a story essentially the same as that of "Young Beichan." It is significant, as J. H. Dixon has pointed out,[79] that in the only version in which the name "Bekie" occurs, the scene of the captivity is France, and the heroine is a Christian lady rather than a Saracen. He shows too that in the broadside of "Lord Bateman" (the only ancient form in which the ballad existed in print), the hero is represented as a Northumbrian who held large possessions. He mentions a Northumbrian tradition that the hero was one of the ancient and noble family of Bartram or Bertram. The truth seems to be that the resemblance between the ballad and the story of the Saracen Princess is, like the resemblance between the legend and the romances, due largely to the fact that both of them drew from a stock situation and common legendary material of the Middle Ages. Perhaps the influence has been exerted in both directions. As Child admits, the ballad versions may have been affected by the Becket legend; and likewise later versions of the Becket legend were influenced by the fact that people believed the ballad to be an account of the experiences of Gilbert Becket. Miss Clark, for example, gives the ballad as one of her sources, and in many instances uses the exact words of the ballad version.[80] Meyer, in *Der Heilige*, uses the ballad as a means of introducing the story of Thomas Becket.[81]

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[76] Charlotte Yonge, in *Cameos from English History from Rollo to Edward II* (London, 1868), I, 136.

[77] It is interesting to note that this conclusion represents a reversal of Child's earlier view. In 1860 he had said, "An inspection of the first hundred lines of Robert of Gloucester's *Life and Martyrdom of Thomas Beket* (ed. for the Percy Society by W. H. Black, Vol. XIX) will leave no doubt that the hero of this ancient and beautiful tale is veritably Gilbert Becket, father of the renowned Saint Thomas of Canterbury. Robert of Gloucester's story coincides in all essential particulars with the traditional legend, although Susie Pye is, unfortunately, spoken of in the chronicle by no other name than the daughter of the Saracen Prince Admirand." F. J. Child, *English and Scottish Ballads* (Boston, 1860), IV, 1.

[78] F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Cambridge, 1884), I, 458–9.

[79] James Henry Dixon, *Scottish Traditional Versions of Ancient Ballads*, Percy Society, LVIII (June, 1845), p. 83.

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[80] See above, p. 47.

[81] When Hans, the Swabian archer, is recounting his experiences, he is reminded of the ballad sung by the golden-haired Hilde, the daughter of his master in London:

"In London was Young Beichan born,
He longed strange countries for to see."

His hearers wish to know whom the ballad is about, and Hans tells of both Gilbert and the famous archbishop. (See Meyer, *Der Heilige* (Leipsig, 1910), p. 31.)

## IV

## LEGENDARY MATERIAL RELATING TO THE LIFE OF BECKET

The birth of Thomas Becket, like his parentage, is surrounded by a cluster of traditions. Before his birth, his mother is said to have had a number of dreams, all significant of her boy's future greatness. One night she dreamed that the river Thames flowed into her lap, and on the next day, anxious to know the meaning of the vision, she consulted a stranger, who told her that her son would rule over many people.[1] In the second dream it seemed to her that she came to Canterbury and tried to enter Christ Church Cathedral, but because she was great with child it was impossible for her to enter.[2] Again, she saw twelve stars of unusual splendor fall from heaven into her lap. The mother drew comfort from this vision, because she considered that someone great of birth was prophesied. But Grim, who recounts the dream, adds that to us it shows the glory and future eminence of the saint, who will be found worthy to be with the group of twelve who shall sit as judges over all the earth.[3] In another vision she fancied that she bore within her the whole church of Canterbury.[4] According to the Saga, when she had given birth to her son, she saw a vision of a firebrand which reached unto heaven. This dream signified that her son was so filled with the fire of the Holy Ghost that through his martyrdom he would be installed in the Heavenly seat.[5] Immediately after the birth of the child the midwife lifted him in her arms and exclaimed, "I have raised from the ground a future archbishop!"[6] On the same day a fire broke out in his father's house and spread until it burned a large part of the city of London. This event Grim considers prophetic of the wave of religious zeal which should follow the martyrdom of Becket and result in the building and restoration of churches, adornment of altars, charitable acts, and confession of sin, throughout the Christian world.[7]

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[1] Grim, *Materials for the History of Archbishop Thomas Becket*, II, 365. A second interpretation is given, which draws a parallel with the living waters of which Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman, in John 4:4. The dream is also recounted by Auctor Anonymus I (*Materials*, IV, 3), Guernes (lines 171–5), the Icelandic Saga (*Thomas Saga Erkibyskups*, ed. E. Magnusson, London, 1875, I, 12), and Laurentius Wade (C. Horstmann, "Thomas Beket, Epische Legende, von Laurentius Wade," *Englische Studien*, III (1880). 415). The story in the Saga is condensed and somewhat altered. In the dream, according to this version, the river flowed so close to Matilda that it caught her sark. Magnusson suggests that the Icelandic writer was possibly unwilling to translate the words of Grim and Anon. I in all their nakedness. (See *Thomas Saga*, I, 13). The interpretations vary. According to Anon. I, the dream signifies that Becket will draw many people to Canterbury. The interpretation given in the Saga resembles the second one given by Grim. Guernes gives both interpretations of Grim, and advances the second one as his own opinion.

[2] Grim, *Materials*, II, 357. The vision is also given, with added detail, by Anon. I, *Materials*, IV, 3–4. For the interpretation one must go to Guernes, lines 176–180, or the *Saga*, I, 13–15. The glory of her son would be such that all Syon (Guernes) or all the church on earth (Saga) could not comprehend it. Guernes assumes responsibility for the interpretation himself, but the Saga attributes it to "wise men." According to *Mirk's Festial* (ed. Theodor Erbe, E.E.T.S., Ex. Ser., XCVI, 38) the setting is "Seynt Poules chyrch," the same place where, according to the legend as there given, she had met Gilbert after journeying from the Holy Land to seek him. The interpretation of the dream is given by "hur scheryft-fadyr."

Several authors recount at some length another dream of the mother. Let us take the version of Fitzstephen as representative of the Latin accounts:

> While he was still an infant in the cradle, his mother dreamed that she spoke to the nurse, complaining that he did not have any covering over him. The nurse replied, "Nay, my lady, he has a very good one over him." "Show it to me," said her mistress. The nurse brought it and showed it to her, but was unable to unfold it all, and said, "It is so large that I can not unfold it in this room." Said the mother, "Go out in the hall and there unfold it."

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[3] Grim, *Materials*, II, 357. In Guernes, lines 181–185, where the vision is also given, the interpretation is slightly different. The twelve stars are twelve tribes, which will bow before him, and he will be one of the twelve elect who will judge them. The *Saga*, I, 14, gives a still different interpretation. The meaning of the vision has now become manifest enough, "since her son is honoured no less by angels in heaven than by folk on earth." Tennyson makes use of this legend in his *Becket* and puts into the lips of Herbert an interpretation which agrees with none of those in the sources:

"Ay, the fire, the light,
The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd
Into thy making." (Act I, Scene 1.)

[4] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 13.

[5] *Saga*, I, 14.

[6] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 13.

[7] *Materials*, II, 358.

> As the nurse endeavored to do so, she said, "But I can not unfold it all here." The mother in astonishment said, "Go out into the street, which at this moment is vacant; there surely you can unfold it." But the nurse was unable to do so even there, and exclaimed, "The coverlet is so large that I can see no end to it; it seems as if all England would be too small to contain it."[8]

The version in the Saga is even more picturesque. Instead of seeing the infant lying uncovered in the cradle, as in the Latin versions, the mother spies the coverlet and becomes curious about it.

> It seemed to her as if a cloth of exceeding goodly stuff lay folded together on the boy in the cradle. She thought she waxed eager and right fain to see how broad or wide it might be; for she thought she loved the cloth right much.[9]

When the mother and the nurse attempt in the open field to unfold the coverlet, there comes "a sweet voice out of the air saying unto them: 'In vain ye go on about your ado; the cloth is broader even than all England'."[10]

The accounts of the childhood and youth of Becket contain much legendary material; sometimes a miracle will be related, at other times simply an incident intended to illustrate character. One writer says that his mother was accustomed to weigh her boy at certain times, placing opposite to him in the scales clothing and provisions, which she would afterwards distribute to the poor, "being desirous by this means to commend him to the divine guidance and protection of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary."[11]

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[8] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 13–14. The legend is also found in Grim, *Materials*, II, 357–8, and Anonymus I, *Materials*, IV, 4–5. In these versions the infant is covered with a red coverlet. In both, also, another step is added. After failing to unfold the coverlet in the street, the women take it to a field called Smithfield, the largest open space in the city. While they are trying to unfold it, they hear a voice saying, "In vain do you strive, for not all England will suffice to comprehend the magnitude of this coverlet." Grim is the only one of the Latin authors to venture an interpretation. The costly red cloth signifies "the blood of the martyr innocently slain, which poured out in his passion, lay covered up, but is now extended to all kingdoms and to the farthest portions of the earth."

[9] *Saga*, I, 15.

[10] Compare Grim and Anon. I. The interpretation of the Saga differs from that of Grim. The Icelandic author says that "the cloth betokeneth the holiness and the goodness of this beloved friend of God, who is glorified, not only throughout all England, but also through all Northern lands wherever his blessed name is known unto people." (*Saga*, I, 17.)

The legend occurs also in Guernes, lines 186–200, and in Benoît's "Vie de aint Thomas," lines 25–60 (see F. Michel, *Chronique des Ducs de Normandie, ar Benoît*, Paris, 1844, III, 462–3). Guernes follows Grim. In Benoît the beginning of the legend is changed; the mother gives birth to the coverlet as well as to the child!

Fitzstephen tells an incident to show that Becket's father received by divine revelation some intimation concerning the future of his son:

> His father commended him when a child to prior Robert to be educated in the religious house of the canons of Merton. One day the father came to see his son; when the boy was brought before his father and the prior, the former falling prone worshipped. Indignantly the prior said to him, "O mad old man, what are you doing? Do you fall at the feet of your son? The honor you do to him, he should do to you." To whom the father in secret answered, "Sir, I know what I am doing; that boy will be great in the sight of the Lord."[12]

Herbert relates that once when Becket as a youth was ill with a fever, a certain lady, incomparable for stature, gentleness, and beauty, appeared to him, restored him to health, and delivered to him two keys, telling him that they were the keys of Paradise, of which he should have the custody thereafter.[13]

A legend bearing some resemblance to the foregoing, but more elaborate, is told in Herman Corner's Chronicle. Even as a schoolboy, Thomas possessed a single-hearted devotion to the Holy Virgin, to whom he prayed daily. At the time of the new year, as his companions were boasting of the gifts they had received from their sweethearts, he was disturbed in mind, for he had received no gift from his loved one. Prostrating himself before the image of the Blessed Virgin, he besought her with tears to grant him some gift which he might show to his companions as a token of his lady's favor.

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[11] Anon. I, *Materials*, IV, 7. Aubrey de Vere makes use of this legend in his play, *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, Act II, Scene 5.

[12] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 14.

[13] *Materials*, III, 162. The legend is also found in Laurentius Wade, lines 155–168, whose source is Herbert. Wade adds that the keys were of pure gold.

> Scarcely had the petition been completed, when the image of the Blessed Virgin extended its hand toward the altar, and presented to the youth a small casket, saying, "The bishop's ornaments (clenodium) in this casket preserve for my sake, and use them when you become a priest."[14]

The Icelandic Saga fills in many of the details and retains all the fantastic elements of the chronicle. Thomas is represented as a student at Paris, and the setting of the miracle is a court of love.[15]

A narrow escape from drowning which Thomas had in his youth has served as a basis for story-building. The incident is related in four of the biographies, two of the accounts being miraculous and two non-miraculous in character.[16] The version of Guernes, which is the most conservative of the four, seems to give the facts:

> In the house of his father there dwelt a certain Richers de l'Aigle, with whom Thomas, as I have heard him say, was wont to go, through woods and by streams, for a half-year together. Then he began to love hawk and hound. One day Thomas went with his friend along the river-bank; they

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[14] *Materials*, II, 297.

[15] Among his fellow-students at the school of Paris, according to the *Saga*, there was scarcely a one who did not have a sweetheart; but Thomas persisted in his single devotion to the Blessed Virgin. As Lent approached, the students held a court of love, in which each praised his own beloved for her beauty, wit, or dexterity. Thomas said nothing at all, and thus became the object of glances and jeering. It was decided that on the following morning each one should bring for display a piece of needlework that his sweetheart had wrought. Threatened with hard dealing, Thomas took the matter to the Blessed Virgin in prayer, and asked that she might spare him some trifle of her needle-work. On the following morning when Thomas was called upon for his display, he responded, "I shall go forthwith and show you what my beloved brought me last night." He brought from his private study a snow-white, ivory casket, and laid it before his companions. When it was opened, it was found to contain a full set of bishop's robes. (*Saga*, I, 23–25.) A simpler form of the legend, corresponding more nearly to that of Herman Corner, may be found in Add. MS. 18, 929 (British Museum). See H. L. D. Ward, *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of MSS. of the British Museum* (London, 1883–93), II, 659–60. E. Magnusson, in *Saga*, II, 284, reprints another Norse version, which has in common with the version given in the first volume the setting at Paris and the fact that the gift of the Virgin is a complete set of bishop's robes.

[16] Guernes (ed. E. Walberg, London and Paris, 1922), lines 206–30); Anon. I, *Materials*, IV, 6–7; Grim, *Materials*, II, 360–1; and the *Saga*, I, 33. E. A. Abbott, in his *St. Thomas of Canterbury: His Death and Miracles* (London, 1898), I, 216–219, makes a study of the four versions.

> wished to learn the ways and manners of birds. They came to a mill-stream; there was neither bridge nor means of crossing, except a plank, where shepherds crossed. The baron went before and the youth behind. Over the plank passed the horsemen. Thomas came afterwards, closely hooded. But one of the feet of his horse slipped. He and the horse were plunged into the stream. He was thrown out of the saddle, and down the stream he floated. Beyond the plank there was a mill grinding, toward which Thomas drifted. Just as he was about to be dragged under the wheel, the miller closed the mill-gate.[17] Thus God on this occasion preserved the youth from death.

Anon. I tells substantially the same story, with a little more detail: Thomas and the knight have several companions, and the plank becomes a "pons parvus et arctus, qui tantum pedestres transmittere posset." The author emphasizes the fact that when the miller shut off the water, he was completely ignorant of what was going on.[18] This version adds, too, that the knight and those who were with him followed the boy along the shore uttering loud cries. The miller hearing the cries, came out, and the boy was dragged half-dead from the river.

According to these two versions the escape of Thomas is considered providential, but a miracle is not necessarily involved. In Grim and the Icelandic Saga, however, not only are the circumstances changed, but the rescue is made to appear miraculous. According to Grim, while Thomas was riding along the river bank in the company of his rich friend:

> a falcon following a wild duck and catching it just as it dived into the river was likewise drawn into the water. When the youth saw it, out of pity for the already perishing falcon, he dismounted from his horse and plunged into the torrent, in order that he might save the bird.

But Thomas himself was soon in danger of drowning, and no one could help him.

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[17] Quant il dut en la roue chaiir, le chef avaunt
Li muners ont mulu, mit l'escloture a taunt:" (Lines 222–23).

[18] "Homo qui molendinum curabat, nihil penitus de his quae agebatur sciens, aquam subito a rota exclusit."

> Finally he came to a mill, which happened to be grinding at that time, and he was swept into the current. As he was at the point of destruction, the wheel stopped, nor did it move again, until the youth was drawn out, still alive, but greatly bruised.[19]

The introductory circumstances are changed also in the *Saga*. One day when Thomas was hawking,

> the hawk shot aloft far away from him in pursuit of the prey across a certain river where it alighted. Thomas being minded to fetch the hawk rideth forth into the river.

He came to a narrow bridge used by shepherds and was unable to go any further.

> Wherefore he got off his horse and walked on the bridge, rather in hurry than with foresight, in that his foot slipped and he tumbled into the river.

Not only did the mill-wheel stop, but "the river became in the twinkle of an eye like the calmest river-pool". To the basis of fact these last two accounts have added the invention of the diving duck and the miraculous stopping of the wheel. The *Saga*, as usual, gives the most detailed and picturesque version of the story, but the miraculous portion is earlier, for according to the statement of the writer in the *Saga*, it is quoted from Prior Robert of Cricklade.[20]

When Becket first joined the household of Theobald, his hostess had a dream concerning his future eminence:

> At the city of Harrow he first came to the archiepiscopal curia, with a single companion, Ralph of London.
>
> On the following night it seemed to his hostess that he was sitting on the roof of the church, and his hanging garments covered the church. On the next day she related the dream to her husband, and it was interpreted that one of those youths (for as yet she was ignorant which was Thomas) would be the future lord of the church of that city.[21]

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[19] "Stetit rota nec se movit semel, quosque vivus quidem, sed vehementer afflictus, adolescens extractus est."

[20] Nothing is known of the *Life* of Robert of Cricklade, except that the compiler of the *Saga* acknowledges it as the source from which he drew several striking passages.

[21] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 15.

Several stories deal with the period of Becket's chancellorship. Guernes, William of Canterbury, and the Icelandic *Saga* relate an incident to illustrate the chastity of the young official.[22]

> At the time King Henry the Second was in Staffordshire, he loved a beautiful lady named Avice. But the love of the king waned, and the lady was grieved, for the king was dear to her. While Thomas the Chancellor was at Stoke, the lady often sent messengers to him and thus aroused the suspicion of his host, Vivien the clerk, who thought that Thomas was as immoral as himself. When the lady came there, Vivien decided to confirm his suspicions. He waited until he thought the counsellor would be sleeping; then he took a lantern and went straight to the bed. When he found no one there, he was very greatly astonished, and was still more so, when he saw that not a cover of the bed had been touched. He decided that Thomas must have gone to the house of the lady. His raised his candle in order to be more certain. There on the floor by the bed lay Thomas, with his feet and legs uncovered. He had prayed so long that he had greatly taxed his body; from sheer weariness he had fallen on the floor and was sleeping soundly.[23]

The account of Guernes is the only one that gives the name of the lady, of the host (William calls him "oppidans"), and of the town. William says that the lady sent presents to Thomas,[24] possibly inferring that if she sent messengers to Thomas she would also send gifts. William and the *Saga* agree essentially and omit some of the details of Guernes.[25] After telling the story, the writer in the *Saga* compares Thomas to the martyr Sebastian.[26] In a recent translation of *The Perfect Legendary*[27] several changes have occurred in the story. Here Thomas is sent by the king to provide whatever is needful for a lady at Strafford with whom the king has a friendship. Thomas lodges *at the lady's house,* and arouses the suspicion of *an old man who has been deputed by the king to look after her.* The old man enters the room by *a secret door.* To have Thomas lodging at the lady's house is only to add to the effect of the climax by making the circumstantial evidence greater, and to throw into bold relief the innocence of Thomas. The idea of the secret door is a natural development of the idea contained in the word "clam" (William).

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[22] Guernes, lines 301–335; William of Canterbury, *Materials*, I, 6; *Saga*, I, 53–55. The story also occurs in the Quadrilogus, being taken from William of Canterbury.

[23] Somewhat condensed from Guernes, *loc. cit.*

[24] Quaeque cancellario transmissit exenia saepe et multa, qui venerat eo loci." *Loc. cit.*

[25] For example, there is no reference to the coming of the lady to the house where Thomas was lodging.

[26] "Sebastian was a man of pomp and served a heathen king, and yet he was none the less beloved of the Lord. Thomas is a man of state, too, and serveth King Henry, and yet he is a man of such virtues as has been shown already." *Saga*, I, 55.

[27] *Il Libro d'Oro*, trans. F. Alexander (Boston, 1905), p. 460.

Fitzstephen tells an anecdote to illustrate the terms of intimacy which existed between the king and his chancellor.

> When business was over, the king and he would play together like boys of the same age, in hall or in church, afoot or horseback. One severe winter day they were riding together through a London street. The king perceived coming toward them at a distance an old man, very poor, and with thin and ragged clothes, and he said to the chancellor, "Do you see that man?" "Yes," replied the chancellor. "How poor, how feeble he is," said the king, "and how scantily clad. Would it not be a great deed of charity to give him a thick, warm cloak?" "It would, indeed," rejoined the chancellor, "and to this purpose, O King, you ought to set your mind and eye." In the meantime the poor man came up; the king stopped, and the chancellor with him. The king accosted the man in a mild tone, and asked if he would like to have a good cloak. The poor man, who knew them not, thought this was a joke, and not spoken in earnest. Said the king to the chancellor, "You shall do this great act of charity," and laying hands upon his hood, the king tried to pull off the cape, a new and very good one which he was wearing, while the chancellor strove to retain it. There was great commotion and tumult; the nobles and knights who were following them, hastened up in astonishment, to know what was the cause of this sudden contention between them. But no one could tell; they were struggling with one another; so that sometimes it seemed that they would fall from their horses. Finally the chancellor, long reluctant, allowed the king to win, to pull the cape from him, and to give it to the poor man. Then the king told the story to his attendants; great was the laughter of all, and some offered their own capes and cloaks to the chancellor. And the poor old man who had received the chancellor's cape, went away, happy and rich beyond expectation, and giving thanks to God.[28]

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[28] *Materials,* III, 24–5.

Mirk's *Festial*, which also tells the story, adds that the king admonished the poor man to sell the cloak and buy other clothes, for if he bargained well, he might fare better all the days of his life. Thomas, the author says, pretended to be angry, but he was well paid for the loss of the coat.[29] Two modern writers introduce this anecdote into a play in order to draw a parallel between this contest and the strife between the archbishop and the king, and thus to serve as motivation for the later struggle.[30]

All admirers of Becket doubtless recall the story of his protest and warning to the king when he was first informed that Henry purposed to place him in the vacant see of Canterbury, and would be sorry to see the story proved mythical. Fortunately it does not seem necessary to discredit it, at least in its earliest form. We have the story on the authority of Herbert, who was certainly qualified to speak on any point which concerned the life of the chancellor, and who insists that he had often heard it from the archbishop himself during his exile.[31] Besides, the other biographers, though they do not give the circumstances in full, do emphasize the fact that Becket hesitated to accept the archbishopric.[32] There seems to be no justifiable reason to doubt that Becket's reluctance was sincere and that he warned the king of the consequences if he should become archbishop.[33] Herbert's account of the interview is as follows:

> (Thomas had been for some time with the king in Normandy. Before returning to England on a mission connected with affairs of state, the chancellor called on the king at the castle of Falaise.) The king called him apart

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[29] *Mirk's Festial*, ed. Theodor Erbe, E.E.T.S., Extra Series XCVI, 39–40. Mirk prefaces the story with the droll comment, "For trewer loue was neuer bytwene two men þen was bytwen þe kyng and Thomas, whyll hit last."

[30] C. W. Barroud, *St. Thomas of Canterbury* (London, 1892), Act III, Scene 4, and Richard Cattermole, *Becket* (London, 1832), Act III, Scene 1, pp. 83–4.

[31] "Hanc historiae pericopen ab ipsomet pontifice postea in exsilio, propter verbi sui quasi cujusdam vaticinii finem tunc impletum, saepius rememorante didici." *Materials*, III, 182.

[32] John of Salisbury says that Thomas would have finally declined if it had not been for the arguments of Henry of Pisa. *Materials*, II, 306. See also William of Canterbury, *Materials*, I, 8; Auct. Anon. I, *Materials*, IV, 18, and especially Auct. Anon. II, in *Materials*, IV, 86.

[33] See L. B. Radford's excellent treatment of this subject in his *Thomas of London before his Consecration* (Cambridge, 1894), pp. 197–205.

and spoke to him secretly. "You do not know as yet the real reason for your mission," and he added, "my will is that you shall be archbishop of Canterbury." With a smile the chancellor pointed out his gay costume. "What a religious man," he said, "what a saint you wish to install in that holy seat and over such a pious body of monks. Know for a surety that if by the will of God this thing should come to pass, your mind would very quickly be estranged from me, and that high esteem which now exists between us would be turned to bitter hatred. For you will surely make several new demands, and even now you assume an authority in ecclesiastical matters which I should not be able to support with a tranquil mind. And then, with the occasion furnished, individuals would thrust themselves forward, who would take advantage of the decline of our friendship to stir up continual strife between us."[34]

In the Icelandic *Saga* the story is told with some embellishments, and one is bound to feel that they are legendary accretions. Thomas reminds the king that there are many laudable persons in the realm who put to shame his "fleshly looseness." He predicts that, if the event which the king desires should come to pass, he himself might turn out to be quite different from the man whom the king knows, and concludes with an appeal, "I therefore pray, in all humbleness, that you go somewhere else."[35] Doubtless Becket, who knew the king far better than the king knew his chancellor, did have a premonition that if he should become archbishop, differences might arise between them. In Herbert's story, this premonition is voiced in a prophecy that their friendship might suffer. The next step, in the light of subsequent events, would be to attribute this result to a change in the attitude of Becket, and this step the writer of the *Saga* has taken.

In both Herbert and the *Saga* there is a sequel to this story. The version of Herbert may be given:

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[34] *Materials*, III, 180–1. A similar story, now generally rejected, was told of Hildebrand and Henry IV of Germany (J. G. Robertson, *Becket*, London, 1859, p. 38. He cites Bonizo, ap. Oefel Scriptores Rerum Boicarum, 811; Card. de Aragonia, ap. Murator, iii, 304. Obviously the analogy does not destroy the authenticity of Herbert's narrative).

[35] *Saga*, I, 65.

> To one man, named Richard de Luci, who was especially distinguished among the legates, the king spoke. "Richard, if I were dead, would you help to elevate my first-born, Henry, to the kingship?" The other replied, "Yes, indeed, my lord, in so far as I could." Then the king said to him, "In the same manner I wish you to work for the promotion of the chancellor to the see of Canterbury."[36]

The *Saga* reports the incident up to this point in the same way, but adds a remarkable detail:

> At the same time the king settled privily with the cardinal that he should give such aid to the affair that his own furtherance thereof should not be needed![37]

Many legends, most of them miraculous in character, center about the figure of Becket as archbishop. Many of them are connected with Becket's exile in France. One of the most remarkable stories, related by Alan of Tewkesbury, tells how fish was miraculously supplied to Thomas when, after fleeing from England, he was on his way to the monastery of St. Bertin's.

> As they were travelling by boat, for there was a way they could go by water, they came near St. Bertin's. A certain one remarked to Thomas, "Master, you are wearied from the journey, and we are coming today to most exceptional people, whose greatest cause for rejoicing in the Lord will be that you have escaped unharmed from your enemies: grant to them out of kindness, therefore, that at your coming they may feast abundantly." "The fourth day," replied the lord of Canterbury, "is a fast-day, and it behoveth us today to abstain from such things." Then a second spoke up, "Master, perhaps they will not have enough fish, and we shall need to show them some indulgence." "The Lord will provide," replied he of Canterbury. While they were talking, suddenly by the will of God a great fish, known as a bream, leaped from the water and hurled itself into the lap of the Man of God. And they passed the time joyfully during that journey in praising God.[38]

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[36] *Materials*, II, 182.

[37] *Saga*, I, 67–69.

[38] *Materials*, II, 336. The miracle is also recorded, but without any change in the story (perhaps because it could scarcely be made more remarkable) in the *Saga*, I, 257–9. The *Chronicon Sancti Bertini* of Johanne Iperius also contains an account without substantial variation. See Martène et Durand, *Thesaurus Novus Anecdoturum* (Paris, 1717), III, cols. 655–6. It is summarized from this source in *Southey's Common-place Book*, Third Series, Analytical Readings (ed. J. W. Warter; London, 1850), p. 399.

It is especially significant that Alan is the only one of the Latin authors to record this miracle. As E. A. Abbott remarks, the silence of Guernes, Grim, and Fitzstephen, who mention the journey, and of Herbert of Bosham, who met the archbishop at St. Bertin's and listened to a minute account of the perils through which he had passed, is practically conclusive evidence that the miracle is not historical.[39]

The anonymous English translation of the *Legenda Aurea* gives a miracle which is supposed to have been performed to demonstrate to the pope Becket's holiness of life. The following account is taken from Add. MS. 11565 in the British Museum:

> And then the kyng sent his men with hym to convey hym theder and he come to Rome vpon seint Markes day aftir none and then his cater went fourth to bye his dyn*er* for he and al his men were fastyng but he cowde not gete no fisshe for al was solde or he come and so he went to his hoste ayene and told seint Thomas that he cowde no fisshe gete. Then he bade hym by suche mete as he myght gete. And then he bought flesshe for hi*m* and al his men and made it redy and set them to dynner and seruyd seint Thomas with a rostide capon. and when the pope had knowleche that he was come he sent a cardynal to welcome hym and when the cardynal se that he & al his men ete fflesshe he had gret m*ar*veil therof and toke his leve and come in gret hast anone to the pope and seid. Holy fader this bishop of Englonde is no suche parfite man as ye holde hym for he this day etith flesshe mete and al his men whiche is ayenst yo*ur* ordinaunce in al holy churche thorugh al c*hri*sste*n*dome. Then seid the pope I knowe right wel he is not so disposid and then the Cardynal confermed it with an othe that it was so indede wherefore the pope sent theder another cardynal and bade hym to brynge to him p*ar*te of suche mete as he ete and toke a capons legge and put it in his kerchir and brought it to the pope and when he toke it oute of his kerchir it was an hole fisshe that is callid a carpe and then this cardynal was gretly abashed and seid to the pope verely it was a capons legge whan I put it in to my kerchir and when the pope herde this he had gret wondir of this thynge and sent for seint Thomas and welcomyd him and askyd of hym what mete he had to his dyn*er* and he said holy fader I wolde haue ete fisshe but I come so late that al was gone. And then I bade my cater bye suche mete as he cowde finde to selle. and so he bought a capo*n* for my dyner and other flesshe for my men. And when the pope knewe this gret myracle he grantide xl. days

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[39] *Op. cit.*, I, 274–5. See Grim, *Materials*, II, 400; Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 70; and Herbert, *Materials*, III, 329.

> of pardon to all the*m* that ete flesshe on seint Markes day that dwel in his diocise.[40]

The reference to Rome catches one's attention immediately. There is no evidence that Becket was ever in Rome after he became archbishop;[41] he visited the pope, who was also in banishment, at Sens. From the anonymous translation, in all probability, the legend finds its way into Caxton. Here, although the narrative is shortened, one miraculous detail is added: St. Thomas is credited with a knowledge of the conversations that had passed between the pope and the cardinals.[42] The late origin of the miracle of the carp, for it is found in none of the Latin lives, in Benedict's collection of miracles, nor even in the *Saga*, is enough to establish its legendary character.[43]

Roger Hoveden, the chronicler, relates a miracle of water being turned into wine.

> One day when the archbishop was sitting at the table of Pope Alexander, a person who was acquainted with his manner of life placed before him a bowl of water. The Pope reached for it, tasted it, and found it to be an excellent wine. "I thought you drank water," he said, and placed the bowl back before the archbishop, when straightway the wine returned to its former taste of water.[44]

Even Mr. Morris questions this miracle,[45] and recalls that Herbert of Bosham says Thomas did not drink water, but always wine, though in moderation.[46] Another version of the legend, much more elaborate than that of Hoveden, was told by Arnold of Lubeck, perhaps not more than twenty-five years later.

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[40] Fol. 50 a (col. 2) – fol. 50 b (col. 1).

[41] See p. 220.

[42] "And after this saynt Thomas cam to tho pope & dide his reuerence & obedie*n*ce whom the pope welcomed / & after certayn co*m*mynycacion / he demanded hym what mete that he had eten / and he said flessh as ye haue herd to fore / . . ." William Caxton, *The Golden Legend* (1483), fol. 106 b–107a (British Museum).

[43] John Morris, in his *Life and Martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket* (London, 1885), II, 488–9, quotes the legend from the sixteenth century life printed by Pynson (a reissue of Caxton; see above, p. 37), but misreads "rome" as "come." The legend is also reprinted in *Dublin Review*, XLIX, 16.

[44] Ed. Stubbs (Rolls Series), II, 11.

[45] *Op. cit.*, II, 489–90.

[46] See *Materials*, III, 235–6.

> One day when the Pope was seated with the archbishop he chanced to be thirsty, and he said to the boy that was waiting on him, "Bring me water from the fountain to drink." When it was brought, the Pope said to the archbishop, "Bless it and drink." He blessed it and it was changed into wine, and when he had tasted it he gave it to the Pope. When the Pope perceived that it was wine, he called the boy aside and said to him, "What did you bring me?" The boy replied, "Water." Then he said, "Bring me some more of the same." When the boy had done so a second time, the Pope said again to the bishop, "Brother, bless it and drink." And he, not knowing that virtue had gone out from him, but believing that wine had been purposely brought, simply blessed it, and it was again changed into wine, which he drank and gave to the Pope. And he, not yet believing, and thinking that a mistake had been made, a third time secretly asked for water, and a third time it was changed into wine. Then the Pope was afraid, perceiving that the man was a saint, and that the virtue of God was manifested in him.[47]

The legend illustrates the tendency to attempt to parallel in the life of Becket miracles which were wrought by Christ, and also shows how quickly such a story might grow in interest and effectiveness.[48]

Cures are supposed to have been wrought by the archbishop while he was yet alive. The most remarkable of such legends is that which concerns the restoration of the son of the French king.

> When he was in France at the court of King Louis, where he was well treated, the king one day happened to have guests at a feast. When the meal was being prepared, the little son of the king came into the kitchen, accidentally fell into a cauldron full of boiling soup, and was suddenly killed. The servants who saw the accident brought the sad report to the king. The mother though greatly agitated concealed this lamentable occurrence, and the guests at the feast were not disturbed, but the arrival of the royal hosts was overclouded by affliction and sorrow. They did not, on this occasion,

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[47] *Chronica Slavorum, Materials*, II, 290–1.

[48] It seems possible that the source of this legend may be a vision given by William of Canterbury. A priest named Reginald has a vision in which an anthem in English is sung to Thomas as a martyr before his canonization. In the anthem occur the lines,

> "Selcuth dede ure Drichtin
> Dhat he dhi wetter wente to wyn."

Or, "Salvator noster mirum fecit, qui tuam aquam in vinum vertit." *Materials*, I, 151. See also E. A. Abbott, *op. cit.*, II, 289–90.

> bear their grief and distress to the holy man, but he, being aware of what had taken place, soon poured out his prayers to God, earnestly petitioning for the restoration of the child. After he had prayed, and when all the principal guests had been seated, the archbishop said, "Your highness should order brought among the guests that dish which you keep in the king's room, that God Almighty may be glorified through his acts of compassion, and that this worldly joy may be accompanied by spiritual joy. For I know what has happened to your only son." The minds of the guests were filled with dismay by these words of the archbishop; the king was stupified; and the queen sank unconscious into the hands of the nobles. Then the king, leaping up from the table, hurried to the bedchamber, and upon opening the door, he found the child in the royal bed playing. When this had been made known to the mother, she having recovered her senses rose up from the ground, and reciting the series of events to all, she rejoiced exceedingly. Therefore great glory was given to God, through the merits of the holy bishop, who by his prayers restored the boy to his former life and health.[49]

Two sources, an anonymous *Passio* and Guernes,[50] record miracles performed by Becket at Pontigny. The writer of the *Passio* declares that he learned of the miracles from an eye-witness who had shared the archbishop's exile and who recounted them to a large audience in Canterbury Cathedral, maintaining before God and the relics of the holy martyr that he spoke the truth. A certain monk who had suffered from dropsy for three years was informed in a vision (by the Virgin Mary, says Guernes) that he should apply to the holy archbishop. Upon the confession of the monk he was immediately made whole. Guernes' account of the miracle is suspiciously indefinite. He does not know the name of the monk; he says the archbishop gave the man something to drink, but Guernes does not know what it was.[51] The more the martyr tried to conceal his light, says the *Passio*, the more brightly it shone.

> For there flocked to him the sick and the needy, that from the fragments of the bread and vegetables which the holy man ate, they might be delivered both from hunger and from illness. Among others who came a certain sol-

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[49] From Hermanni Corneri *Chronicon*, *Materials*, II, 296–7.
[50] Pseudo-Grim, *Materials*, II, 287; Guernes (ed. Walberg), ll. 3666–3675.
[51] "Uns des convers as monies (ne le m'unt pas nummé)" (line 3651).
"A beivre li duna, mais ne sai quei, de fi." (line 3666).

> dier brought his daughter who had been ill for a year and a half. Scarcely had she tasted the fragments which fell from the hand of the holy archbishop than giving thanks to God and to the holy exile she went back home whole with her father.[52]

Guernes summarizes the cures at Pontigny by saying, "There was not in the country any man so full of fever as not to receive complete and certain health by his relief."[53] But as the other early writers, some of whom were certainly present at Pontigny, are all silent on the subject of the miracles, they must be considered merely legendary accretions.[54]

Popular interest in the haircloth shirt which was discovered after the murder, and which convinced the people that Becket had been a saint, is responsible no doubt for the development of legends about the garments of the archbishop. One is given in Herman Corner's Chronicle.

> It is stated also that one day he was seated at the table of the king (of France), and the queen perceived that his sleeves were tightly fastened at the wrist, as if he had something in them which might escape. She said to him, "Holy father, what precious thing do you have in your sleeves which are so tightly fastened?" The archbishop was embarrassed lest the vermin in his sleeves should fall out if they were loosened, and humiliate him. The holy man replied to her, not knowing for shame what he said, "O queen, I have pearls concealed in them." "I beg of you," said the queen, "show them to us." When the bishop excused himself on the ground that they might be lost, she protested that they would not, and insisted strongly that she must see some of them. Finally the saint yielded to the urgent pleading of the woman, and when he had offered a short prayer, trusting fully in the power of God he opened the sleeves, and beautiful pearls fell from them. When the queen saw them, she asked persistently to be allowed to retain them for herself; but the Man of God declared that he could by no means give them up, and when he restored them to the sleeves, they were changed back to their former state.[55]

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[52] In relating this miracle, Guernes says merely,
"La fille a un riche humme en devint tute saine,
Qui out esté fievrose mainte lunge semaine." (ll. 3672–73).

[53] "N'out el païs nul humme si plain de fievre vaine,
Par sun relief n'eüst santé tute certaine." (ll. 3674–75).

[54] See Abbott's discussion of this matter, *op. cit.*, II, 279–280. Anon. I, who was almost certainly at Pontigny, and Herbert, who was certainly there, make no mention of the miracles.

[55] From *Hermanni Corneri* (clar. 1430) *Chronicon*, *Materials*, II, 296–97.

Another such legend comes from Thomas of Cantimpré.

> The blessed Thomas of Canterbury, archbishop and martyr, was exiled, fled into Gaul, and lingered for some time in Pontigny, a monastery of the order of the Cistercians. The holy archbishop was accustomed to wear next to the body a hair-cloth shirt and drawers, and being suddenly compelled to fly from England, he had made little provision for the changing of clothes. Because of age the drawers became worn, and he did not wish to have any of his attendants learn his secret, not even a holy recluse who had been with him previously at Canterbury One day he lingered alone at the end of the choir without the church in order to repair his drawers. Ignorant and inexperienced in this kind of work and distressed about what to do, he did not know how he should begin, when behold the Queen of the world, not ignorant of such work, . . . saluted the Archbishop, comforted him lest he should fear, took the garment from his hands, sat down beside him, and repaired the rent most neatly. As soon as the work was completed, she disappeared. But the archbishop, dissolved into tears, repaid her with praise and great admiration.[56]

The secret of Becket's hair coat was, according to popular belief, revealed to a few individuals even during Becket's lifetime. Usually the knowledge was supposed to be divinely imparted for some practical reason, as in another legend by Thomas of Cantimpré. A certain chaplain, as innocent of learning as he was of any wrong-doing, was accused by envious priests of celebrating only the Mass of St. Mary.

> Brought before Archbishop St. Thomas, he did not deny that he had celebrated only the Mass of the Holy Virgin. The archbishop, who sympathized with the chaplain, but was unable to do anything for him because of his insufficient knowledge of letters, said to him, "Cease to perform mass,

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[56] *Bonum Universale de Apibus* (ca. 1255), (Dvaci, 1627), p. 285; reprinted in *Materials*, II, 293. E. A. Abbott classifies this legend among the "stories that have no linguistic basis but arise from the endeavor of a pious devotee to throw himself into the position of the Saint, so as to realize what was *fit* for St. Thomas *to do*—which soon is identified with what he actually did—in this or that contingency. . . The pious imagination, meditating on the minutiae of the routine of the Saint's life, seems to have asked itself what St. Thomas was to do when his drawers required mending. Was he to employ assistance? Then his secret would be divulged. That must not be." (*Op. cit.*, II, 291–92.) Hence the development of a legend which would afford an explanation.

dear brother, until you have learned all the sacred offices." Troubled by these words, the chaplain went to his oratory, where an exceedingly beautiful image of the blessed Virgin was located about the altar, and standing full of grief before the image, said, "Thou knowest, Holy Mother, that for your service I have scorned noble marriages, and that I have not cared to have a son, but all is in vain, for I am degraded by suspension. Do now therefore as in your wisdom you see fit, that I may render worship to you once more, or I will certainly destroy this oratory that I have builded." As he said this, leaning against the altar, he flooded it with a shower of tears. Without delay the voice of the Holy Mother responded, speaking through the image. "Be of good cheer, beloved, and go in peace. Hasten to the archbishop and secretly say to him, "The Holy Mother sends you this word through me, 'O master, when you were in the church of the monastery of Pontigny, I mended your drawers for you.'" Upon hearing the voice, the chaplain burst into praise, and immediately hastened to the chapel (curiam) of the archbishop. When the priests and clerks saw him, and recognized him as the man who had been suspended on the previous day, they began to scoff at him and would not admit him to the presence of the archbishop. But after an hour, a certain archdeacon came out who was aware of the good qualities of the chaplain, and conducted him to the archbishop. When the latter recognized him, he began to console him, saying, "You must be patient, beloved, and obey commands. If in any way you are in need of the necessities of life, I will gladly supply your needs: but really what you ask, I can not in good conscience grant." Then the chaplain, calling the archbishop aside, spoke confidentially, "The Holy Mother bids you, as she mended your drawers for you in the church of the monastery of Pontigny, to restore to me the privilege of saying mass." When the archbishop heard this, he fell at the feet of the chaplain, granted his request, and offered him help if he needed it. Responding that he had sufficient for his needs, the chaplain returned thankfully to serve his patroness more devotedly than ever.[57]

The legend has been retold many times, with variations. In Caesarius of Heisterbach the conversation between the Holy Virgin and the chaplain is prolonged. When he is told to go to the bishop and request the restoration of his office, the priest responds:

"My Lady (Domina), I am a poor and despised person; he will not hear me; nor shall I be allowed access to him." The Holy Virgin replied, "Go,

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[57] *Op. cit.*, pp. 286–88; reprinted in *Materials*, II, 292–4.

> and I will prepare the way for you." Said he, "My Lady, he will not credit my words." She answered him, "Tell him as a sign, that at such an hour, and in such a place, he mended his hair shirt (cilicium) and I assisted him and he will immediately believe you."[58]

Johannes Herolt[59] gives the same story, but without naming St. Thomas as the bishop. In St. Vincent Ferrer the circumstances are changed slightly. Thomas lays aside his hair coat one night, not intending to wear it again until he has had opportunity to mend it. The next day the Holy Virgin appears to the chaplain and says, "Tell him that by the love of her who sewed the hair coat which he laid aside at night, he should find in it a silk thread, and by that sign restore to you the privilege of saying mass."[60] Her injunction, in Herman Corner, is still different, "Go tell the archbishop that she, for whose love he says Mass, repaired his hair coat which he had left in such a place, and left with it the red thread with which she worked. She bids him release you from your suspension."[61] Petrus de Natalibus[62] gives the same version, as does St. Antoninus of Florence,[63] but the latter adds the detail that the single mass celebrated by the priest was the "Salue Sancta Parens, &c." The legend is given in the several translations of the *Legenda Aurea* wth scarcely any variation.[64]

A similar legend, if not the same one in a different form, is to be found in an Anglo-Norman miracle of the Holy Virgin entitled, "St. Thomas et le Prêtre Perverse."[65] Here the chaplain is a dissolute character; when he is dismissed he does not lose all hope, but follows St. Thomas into exile, and each Saturday he vows service to the Holy Virgin and demands forgiveness for his sins. One day the Virgin appears to him and promises to reconcile him with the archbishop. The rest of the story agrees with that of Thomas of Cantimpré. As Kjellman has noted, there is a similar version among the miracles of Jean Mielot,[66] though in this case nothing is said about the priest's following Thomas into exile; and after the vision is recounted, the archbishop makes the priest his chaplain.

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[58] Caesarius Heisterbacensis, *Illustrium Miraculorum* (Coloniae Agrippinae, 1599), vii, 4, pp. 462–3.

[59] *Sermones Discipuli* (1480), no pagination.

[60] *Sermones sancti Vincentij. . . De Sanctis* (1539), fol. xxvi b. "Dicas quod amore illius que suit cilicum quod in nocte deposuit, et inveniet in eo adhuc vnum filium de serico & dabit tibi licentiam celebrandi, &c."

[61] Hermanni Corneri *Chronicon*, in Eccard, *Corpvs Historicvm Medii Aevi* (Lipsiae, 1723), II, 746–7.

[62] *Catalogus Sanctorum* (Venice, 1516), ii, 13, p. 30.

[63] *Opus Chronicum* (Lugduni, 1586), II, 707.

[64] The original of Voragine, as edited by Graesse (Lipsiae, 1840), p. 68, does not mention the color of the thread, but both Jean Bataille (*Legende Dorée*, p. xxvii) and Caxton (*op. cit.*, IV, 58–59) do so.

[65] Hilding Kjellman, *La Deuxième Collection Anglo-Normande des Miracles de la Sainte Vierge* (Paris, 1922), pp. 255–263.

The source of these legends is perhaps, as Kjellman has pointed out,[67] the Latin miracle of the Virgin entitled *The Priest Who Knew Only One Mass: Salve, Sancta Parens.*[68] There are several resemblances between this miracle and the legend of "St. Thomas and the Ignorant Priest". In both the priest knows only one Mass; he is accused before an ecclesiastical authority and suspended from office; and later he is restored to his office as a result of a vision of the Holy Virgin. It has been noted above that Antoninus of Florence specifically mentions *Salve, Sancta Parens* as the Mass used by the priest. But there are also some differences: in the miracle the superior is a bishop instead of an archbishop, as in most of the versions of the legend, and the Virgin appears to the bishop instead of to the priest, threatening him with death within thirty days if he does not reinstate his subordinate. The reference to the hair coat does not appear at all in the miracle. Perhaps the detail that the priest is a wicked character, characteristic of the versions of "St. Thomas et le Prêtre Perverse" was suggested by a version of "The Priest Who Knew Only One Mass" given by Petrus Damianus.[69] In any case, the story of a miracle of the Holy Virgin in which an ignorant priest is suspended by a bishop seems to have become connected with St. Thomas of Canterbury at some time during the first half of the thirteenth century (for the legend is not given in any of the contemporary lives of Becket, and Thomas of Cantimpré flourished about 1255), and to have grown in detail and effectiveness.

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[66] *Miracles de Nostre Dame* (ed. G. F. Warner; Westminster, 1885), pp. 56–7.

[67] *Opus cit.*, pp. xlvii, lxxiv.

[68] Jacobus de Voragine, *op. cit.*, cap. 131, pp. 592–3. A version is in Vincentius Bellovacensis, *Speculum Historiale* (Strasburg, 1473), vii (but marked viii in this edition), 113, fol. 164b. There are metrical versions in Gautier de Coincy, *Les Miracles de la Sainte Vierge* (ed. M. l'Abbé Poquet; Paris, 1857), pp. 323–326, and Jehan Le Marchant, *Le Livre des Miracles de Notre Dame de Chartres* (ed. M. G. Duplessis; Chartres, 1855), pp. 204–5. In the appendix of the latter work is reprinted a Spanish version from Don Gonzalo de Berceo. Mussafia, in his *Studien zu den Mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden* (Vienna, 1887–91), II, 55 and III, 31, cites a version of the miracle in Gil de Zamora, vii, 14. The miracle is published in several collections: *Marienlegenden* (Stuttgart, 1846), pp. 270–1; *Liber de Miraculis Sanctae Dei Genitricis Mariae* published by Bernard Pez (ed. T. F. Crane; Ithaca, N. Y., and London, 1925), p. 12. H. L. D. Ward's *Catalogue of Romances in the Dept. of MSS. of the British Museum*, II, 618, describes a MS. of about 1200 A. D. which contains the miracle. A synopsis of the story is given in II, 607. Several later MSS. containing the miracle are cited, II, 632ff.

Another legend connected with the hair coat is told by Laurentius Wade, who gives as his authority John of Exeter.[70] When Becket, on his way to Canterbury after his return from exile, passed through Wrotham, he met a poor priest, who gave him relics of Saints Cecil and Lawrence.

> "Thene owr goode Thomas askede the priste anone
> How thatt he here knew thatt they soche reliques were,
> He sayede: seynt Laurence apperyde in a visione
> Unto hyme & so shewde, by this prevy tokyne here:
> Thatt newly brokene ye felt your shert off heere,
> Brethynge whether ye myghte make chaunge or noo,
> Reserchide your-selff, ande founde hitt alle hole thoo."[71]

Sometimes in moments of stress, when Becket was fleeing from his enemies, gates were, according to some of the writers, miraculously opened for him. For example, when the archbishop left the royal castle at Northampton, he found the outer gate locked and the porter absent. Then, according to Fitzstephen, "the door, which all day had been securely locked, was opened to him as though spontaneously."[72] Anon. I gives a fuller account:

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[69] *De Bono Suffragiorum et Variis Miraculis*, cap. 3, in Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, CXLV, col. 564.

[70] John Grandison.

[71] *Op. cit.*, lines 1786–1793.

[72] "Quod tota die strictissime obseratum, quasi ultro apertum est ei." *Materials*, III, 68.

> At length the archbishop on horseback reached the castle gate, and when he found it tightly fastened, he stopped amazed and alarmed. But one of his attendants, named Peter of Mortorium, observing a bundle of keys hanging above, quickly snatched them, and (which seemed to some as a miracle)[73] among so many keys finding without delay the one which was needed, opened the gate quickly, with no opposition or resistance.

Here the miracle is made to depend merely upon the quickness with which the proper key is found. In the *Saga*, strangely enough, the miraculous element is eliminated:

> And soon this hindrance becometh lighter through the will of God, for they see many keys somewhere on the wall, of which they bore to the lock one after the other until the very one was found which fitted the gate.[74]

A similar incident occurred at Canterbury shortly before the murder. When word was brought to the Archbishop that the knights were arming, his attendants entreated him to seek refuge in the cathedral. They reminded him that vespers were beginning, and urged that it was his duty to attend the services. As the usual passage to the cathedral was barred by armed men, they turned through a room that had a private door, rarely used, which led from the palace to the cloisters of the monastery. As the key was lost, one of the monks ran ahead to force open the door. According to Grim, "he grasped the lock, and not without the great admiration of all, pulled it off with the utmost ease, as if it had been fastened with glue."[75] Guernes gives the same account, but adds that God gave the monk strength.[76] Anon. I is certain of miraculous intervention:

> One of the monks ran ahead to see whether he could break so strong a lock, but scarcely had he touched it than by divine will, to the wonder of

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[73] "Quod quasi miraculum quibusdam visum est." *Materials*, IV, 52.

[74] I, 223.

[75] "Ubi primum seram contigit, non sine multa omnium admiratione tanta facilitate extraxit ac si glutino cohaesisset." *Materials*, II, 435.

[76] "Le loc prist a dous mains; la a Deus fait vertuz:
Quant de loc volt estuerdre, es poinz li est chauz,
Cum se il fust aers a un petit de gluz." Lines 5452–54.

> himself and all who followed, it fell off in his hand, as if it had been only slightly fastened to the door.[77]

But Benedict apparently sees no miracle in the opening of the door. "Breaking the lock of the door which led into the church through the cloisters, a few monks who bravely attended him led their father, although he was unwilling (toward the cathedral)."[78]

When Becket returned from his exile, he delivered a sermon in his church at Canterbury, exhorting his people to pray for him, for he felt that his time was near, and excommunicating those who had offended the Church. According to William of Canterbury, the effect of the sentence upon Robert de Broc was both immediate and remarkable.

> For when in his home, which he had built from trees of the archiepiscopal estates of Canterbury cut from different places according to his wish, he was holding a feast with some companions, the dogs refused the bread which had come in contact with his hand, but eagerly devoured that which was extended by any other hand whatsoever, and of the whole body of scraps thrown to them, they were seen to abstain from whatever had been contaminated by his touch.[79]

Caxton's translation of the *Golden Legend* gives a somewhat different version:

> And that same day as the king sat at meat all the bread that they [those who had been excommunicated] handled waxed anon mouldy and hoar, that no man might eat of it, and the bread that they touched not was fair and good for to eat.[80]

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[77] "sed mox ut eam tetigit, divino nutu, mirante ipso et omnibus qui aderant, ita in manus ejus collapsa est ac si ostio minime adhaesisset." *Materials*, IV, 75.

[78] "Monachi vero, qui forte pauci aderant, seram ostii, quod ad ecclesiam per claustrum ducebat, confringentes, patrem suum, licet invitum, educere satagabant." *Materials*, II, 10. Likewise William of Canterbury finds no miracle: "et ostium obseratum quod in claustrum ducit ingringentes reluctantem propellerent." *Materials*, I, 131. On this miracle see Abbott, *op. cit.*, I, 52–55, who corrects an error of A. P. Stanley, in his *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* (2nd American ed., New York, n.d.), pp. 96–7.

[79] *Materials*, I, 120. From William this passage finds its way into the Quadrilogus, *Materials*, IV, 383. The *Saga* mentions the matter, though briefly, (I, 513), and the *South English Legendary* (lines 2010–2019) gives an account which agrees with that of William (probably translated from the Quadrilogus).

[80] *Op. cit.*, II, 195.

Visions attended Becket during all the stages of his career, foretelling future events, giving him warnings, and prescribing certain courses of action. After his election as archbishop he had a vision, which he confided the next day to Herbert.

> And so he was elected at London, just as he had been born there. Soon after the election he set out for Canterbury with a large body of attendants for the ceremony of consecration. On the way he called aside one of his clerks, and informed him secretly that on the previous night a venerable person had appeared to him in a vision and given him ten talents. This clerk was Herbert of Bosham. The clerk listening to the dream hesitated at that time to venture any interpretation; but afterward he glorified God, perceiving that this was prefigured by the servant in the gospel who accepted as principal five talents, and who added to them by trading other five. Such was the dream and its interpretation.[81]

Becket was so impressed by the vision that he requested the clerk to tell him whatever rumors he heard about his conduct, and to point out any errors that he might commit.

The various accounts of a vision which Becket is said to have had during his stay at Pontigny serve as a good illustration of the growth of a legend. The version of Guernes seems to be the earliest one.

> One night when he had become greatly wearied in prayer, and had fallen asleep, he saw in a vision the following: Both he and the king, who hated him without reason, were before the pope in discussion and dispute. All the cardinals were banded against him. And they tried to gouge his eyes from his head with their fingers and tear them in pieces. The pope alone wished to support him, and well he understood his cause, but he could not make him hear, for their cries and their noise had caused him to become hoarse[82] [in trying to talk against the confusion]. In the court[83] with him no man re-

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[81] Quadrilogus, *Materials*, IV, 279, condensed from Herbert, *Materials*, III, 185–6. The vision is also given in Gervase, I, 170. In the *Saga*, I, 87, a fuller interpretation is given. "But it must be clear to all that the holy station of supremacy of the blessed Thomas, which God had given him, was signified by the ten pounds, according to the Gospel, but the increase of souls and the upholding of the right of God is the gain of another ten." The vision is related briefly, without any interpretation, in Wade, lines 218–224.

[82] "Car lur criz e lur noise l'ourent fait enroïr."

[83] "Al consistorie."

mained. Some murderers then entered, and sheared off the top of his crown, as it seemed to him, with their swords. Well did God promise him that he should be slain in His cause for holy church.[84]

The version of Grim is,[85] as M. Walberg has noted,[86] in great part, a literal translation of Guernes. Grim, however, makes no mention of the pope's "hoarseness."[87] William of Canterbury[88] makes an important contribution to the narrative by calling the murderers "attendants of the king,"[89] and saying that they were four in number. He does not speak of the cardinals, but calls them "assessors of the judge."[90] In Herbert of Bosham[91] the four murderers are soldiers and the scene is a church.[92] In the *Saga*[93] the intruders are "four knights in armour." In the *South English Legendary*[94] the Church of Canterbury is specified, the cardinals are omitted, the murderers are knights, and the parallel between the details of the prophetic vision and the actual fact is complete.[95]

Abbott,[96] in an excellent study of the vision at Pontigny, thinks that the last sentence of the account of Guernes, "Well did God promise him that he should be slain in His cause for holy church," was misinterpreted by some of the biographers as referring to an audible promise, and thus gave rise to a separate vision, of which the earliest version is found in Grim.

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[84] *Op. cit.*, II, 3636–50.

[85] *Materials*, II, 413.

[86] *Op. cit.*, p. lxxxiii.

[87] In Grim, the noise made by the cardinals merely drowned out the voice of the pope, "clamantem apostolicum obmutescere fecit."

[88] *Materials*, I, 51.

[89] "Satellites regii quatuor."

[90] "Judicis assessores."

[91] *Materials*, III, 405.

[92] "In ecclesia (nescio tamen qua) . . . ecce subito quatuor superavenerunt milites."

[93] I, 373.

[94] Ll. 1589-1600.

[95] "In þe chirche of Kaunterburi me þoȝte ic stod iwis
And striuede for holi chirche aȝen þe kyng and his,
þo come þer foure knyȝtes go and smyte me upe þe croune
Ech after oþer, þat my brayn schedde al abrod þer doun."
Ll. 1595-98

Laurentius Wade also recounts the dream, *op. cit.*, ll. 1345-1379. It is used, with one or two variations, in a modern play. See C. T. Winter, *Becket* (London, 1879), Act III, Scene 3. Guernes shortly after telling the dream in question relates another one, which Becket is said to have had at St. Columbe (*op. cit.*, II. 3851-3890). It is similar to the first vision, but mentions specifically Hilary of Chichester and Gilbert Foliot of London.

[96] *Op. cit.*, II, 277-285.

> One day after the celebration of the Mass, as he was prostrate before the altar, with hands stretched out in prayer, utterly carried away by spiritual fervor, the Saviour appeared to him in a vision saying, "Thomas, Thomas, in your blood you shall magnify my church." Said he, "Who art thou, Lord, who visitest me?" The other answered, "I am your brother and your Saviour, who will glorify my church in your blood." Then said he, "Oh that it may be, as the Lord has spoken!" Then he, ever greatly inclined to prayer, sighed from day to day for the love of his Heavenly Father, wishing to be dissolved from the body and to be with Christ.[97]

Grim says that the vision came to Becket at Sens, but Fitzstephen places it at Pontigny.[98] The passage in Fitzstephen is evidently a later interpolation. Elsewhere in the life, as Abbott observes, Becket is called "archiepiscopus," but here he is "beatus Thomas." A detail is added in this account:

> Shortly afterwards, as he arose to go thence, thinking that he alone had heard this, he saw the abbot of the place, who was there in secret, standing near and waiting for him behind a column of the church. And when he realized that the abbot had heard this, he exacted from him a promise to tell no one during his [the Archbishop's] life. But after the martyrdom of the archbishop he revealed it.[99]

The account in the *Saga* involves a prophecy that Thomas shall be honoured, as well as the church.

> "Verily, my church shall be glorified in thy blood; but when she is glorified through thee, thou shalt be honoured by me."[100]

With its characteristic love of dialogue, the *Saga* gives the conversation that takes place between Thomas and the abbot, who has been unobserved until he comes forth from his hiding-place and congratulates the archbishop upon the exalted privilege of speaking with God himself. Apparently this vision was the source of one of the services for St. Thomas' Day, in which a voice from heaven informs Becket of his ultimate martyrdom and the glory that will be reflected upon the church.

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[97] *Materials*, II, 418.
[98] *Materials*, III, 83.
[99] Giraldus Cambrensis likewise relates the vision, in a somewhat briefer form, and without any mention of the abbot. *Materials*, II, 282.

"Laude Thoma, martis die,
Vocem audiens Messiae,
Cum esses in Francia;
Thoma, Thoma, dixit deus,
Sanguis tuus, erit meus
Honor in Ecclesia."[101]

The basis of fact, then, behind the two legends that have just been considered, seems to be that Becket had a dream in which he saw the two cardinals attempt to tear out his eyes as he pleaded his cause before the Pope. Considering the dream prophetic of his martyrdom, the friends and biographers of the archbishop gradually suppressed the differences between the details of the dream and the actual events and added necessary touches until the parallel was perfect. Some writers (perhaps Grim was the first) misunderstanding the comment of Guernes on the first vision, invented another dream to explain it, and then either related both visions (as did Grim and the author of the *Saga*) or told only the second (as did Fitzstephen).[102]

In addition to receiving in visions intimations concerning his own future, Becket was frequently informed in dreams of the future of his enemies. A very curious vision, related by Herbert, was considered a prophecy of the things which should befall the king. The archbishop is represented as speaking.

> One night I had a vision, and behold I stood at the top of an exceedingly high mountain, and the king was below at the foot. Suddenly from all parts of the heaven, birds of all kinds flocked around the king and began to

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[100] I, 317-19.

[101] Published from a missal in an Arundel MS. in "Life and Times of Thomas à Becket," *Church of England Quarterly Review*, April 1841, p. 33.

[102] I have taken the liberty of restating the conclusion reached by Abbott, *op. cit.*, II, 285.

attack him vigorously with their beaks and claws. Very quickly his clothes were torn to pieces, and at last he was left with only a single garment. So many were the birds, and so violent was their attack, that the king was unable to sustain himself against them, and was gradually impelled backward. Behind the king, unseen by him, there was a very steep precipice. As the king approached it, one of the most intimate of his courtiers, in whom the king confided, and whom he had made both with riches and with honors the most illustrious person in the land, cruelly gave his aid to the birds, snatched away the sole remaining garment, and tried to push the king over the precipice. As I perceived this, my heart was filled with compassion, and I recalled the early favors that I had received from the king, and the mutual esteem which had existed between us. I ran to aid the king, and in the stroke of an eye, it seemed to me, I was beside him, with a long and sharp sword (framea) in my hand, though I know not how it came. Just as suddenly, it seemed, all that cloud of birds disappeared. And having liberated the king, I adorned him most splendidly and becomingly with royal costumes, and rebuked that courtier who had sinned by aiding the birds.

And when the archbishop had related this dream, he added briefly, "I shall yet come to the assistance of a certain king." The king himself, when he heard the vision, put an end to the rebellion, and peace given from above followed. This rebellion, so happily consummated, so glorious and indeed miraculous in its end, completely established the truth of the vision. And the king himself was brought to realize its truth, and published abroad the miracle.[103]

Becket had another vision during his exile which involved the future of the king. This, too, is reported by Herbert.

When the archbishop was in Sens, one night after the evening hymns he had gone to bed but his mind was so full of cares that he could not sleep. He thought, among other things, of the King of England, of his greatness and of his prosperity in his sons, in wealth, and in broad dominions. While he was thus reflecting about the king and his sons, and especially about the first-born of this Henry, whom he loved above the others, he longed to know what their future would be, and what plans the Most High had for them. In the midst of his reflections he fell asleep, and behold, he heard a voice uttering in hexameter the following verse:

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[103] Quadrilogus, *Materials*, IV, 419-20. No readable paraphrase could give an idea of the style of Herbert, which is infinitely prolix. The *Saga* (I, 389-91) contains a version considerably condensed but varying in few particulars. The precipice is a slough in the *Saga*, and the sword with which Thomas drives away the birds is merely a whip. No interpretation is given.

> "Mors tulit una duos, tulit altera, sed male, patrem."
>
> Now it is not to be supposed that this verse was composed in his sleep by anyone who could not compose while awake, for not even under scholastic discipline could be attain any proficiency in the art of verse-making. Next day he recalled the verse and added, "Woe is me, our Henry will die before his father or brothers."[104]

Then Herbert proceeds to show how the truth of the prophecy was established by the subsequent events.

Sometimes Becket received assurances in dreams that his enemies would be punished. Guernes says that the archbishop has visions of the judgment which would befall Gilbert Foliot and Hilary of Chichester, in which the flesh of the former would rot and drop to pieces. Guernes insists[105] that the prophecy has been fulfilled as to the Bishop of Chichester, and that the other should beware.[106]

But Becket's visions were often of immediate advantage, for sometimes they served as timely warnings. Before the meeting at Gisors between the archbishop and the legates of the king, Becket, according to Herbert, had a vision in which poison was handed to him in a golden cup.[107] Guernes gives the vision in more detail. A cup of wine was presented to the archbishop, who distrusted its appearance. As he looked at it, he suddenly saw two spiders rise from the bottom. Next morning he related the vision to his companions, with the explanation, "The cup is the King's fair offers; the troubled wine his deceits; the two great spiders are the cardinals."[108]

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[104] Quadrilogus, *Materials*, IV, 421-2 (condensed), from Herbert, *Materials*, III, 460-1. The *Saga* (I, 391), as in the previous vision, gives a briefer account, and promises to tell at the end of the life how the dreams came to be fulfilled, but the explanation never occurs. The *Saga*, quite differently from Herbert, places the two visions together. Magnusson, the editor, says concerning them, "No extant Life could have been here the immediate source of matter or arrangement." Vol. II, p. cxxx. True, but a suggestion for the arrangement may have been found in the fact that one follows the other in the section, "De Gestis post Martyrium," of the Quadrilogus. A reference to this prophecy is found in Gervase, *Historical Works*, ed. William Stubbs (Rolls Series; London, 1880), I, 449.

[105] Ll. 100-1.

[106] An amusing story is told concerning a vision which Foliot himself is supposed to have had. One night, after he had been engaged in conversation with the king regarding Becket, he lay turning over in his mind the recent topics of discussion. Suddenly a mysterious voice sounded in his ears,

"O Gilberte Foliot,
Dum tu revolvis tot et tot,
Deus tuus est Ashtarot."

Indignantly the bishop replied,

"Mentiris Daemon; qui est Deus
Sabaoth est ille meus."

See R. Polwhele, *History of Devonshire* (London, 1797), I, 243, note.

[107] *Materials*, III, 409-10.

The visions of other people about Becket occupy a prominent place in the early biographies, and in some instances were thought to have influenced his actions. Such a vision, for example, is given by Anon. I. For some time after becoming archbishop, Becket retained the fine clothing he had previously worn, and this writer says that the monks of Canterbury were somewhat scandalized by his manner of dress.

> But one of the monks, who was on familiar terms with the archbishop, spoke to him reverently in secret about his dress, and told him of a vision in which the Lord had demonstrated his will in this matter. "The Lord appeared," he said, "to a certain religious and holy man, saying to him, 'Go, tell the archbishop that without delay he must change his clothing, for until he does so, he cannot enjoy my favor.'" Upon hearing this, the archbishop was moved to tears; by no means, however, did he reveal his course of action to the monk speaking to him. But after a little, utterly renouncing his costly and colored garments made of many kinds of skin, he put on, over a hair coat which he wore next to the body, lamb's skins covered with cotton.[109]

When Becket fled from England after the Council of Northampton, his flight was made known to some of his friends through visions. One such dream, a complicated allegory, is related by William of Canterbury.

> Behold a fugitive hedgehog, which a certain deacon saw in a vision. As the King of England came with his whole body of archbishops, bishops, earls, barons, priors, and abbots to a place which is called Wabridge Forest, a hedgehog suddenly ran out of their midst as if startled by the tumult of their coming. When they saw it they began to pursue, with loud cries and insults. But it outran the multitude, not following a straight line but tak-

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[108] *Op. cit.*, II. 105 ff. J. G. Robertson, in his *Becket* (London, 1859), p. 205, notes that Guernes has confused the meeting near Gisors with that at Montmirail.

[109] *Materials*, IV, 21.

> ing a zigzag course, and made its way to the sea, bearing on its back the book entitled "Acts of the Apostles." No one of those who were following was without some physical defect; they seemed either blind or one-eyed, or lame, or they had their lips or nose mutilated. When the hedgehog reached the sea, he leaped into it, and did not emerge again. As soon as those who had been persecuting him saw him disappear, they turned about. And behold a dense and dark fog arose, covering the face of the earth, and it was followed by a rain of blood. But the king turned aside into a royal hall built in this place, and there he sat down. He was clothed with a linen garment white and broad, and his head was encircled with a wreath of fox-tails. But the blood did not cease to fall upon him, as the house, which was in a deserted place, did not have a good roof, and the blood from the dripping fox-tails flowed into his lap. When his lap and the folds of his large garments were full, it began to overflow, and his mouth was seen to be full of blood."[110]

William leaves the interpretation to the reader's imagination, but not so the author of the *Saga*, who finds a meaning for each term of the allegory.[111] In this work, the vision is followed by another, also betokening the flight of Thomas.

> One of the clerks heareth in sleep, anigh to midnight, a clear-sounding voice chant these two verses up in the air:—
>
> Anima nostra siout passer erepta est de laqueo venantium, laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.
>
> Which is, being interpreted: Our life is freed from the snare of the fowler even as a sparrow, the snare is broken and we are free.
>
> This voice showeth that the snare of death was set up for the archbishop or ever he saved himself by flight."[112]

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[110] *Materials*, I, 41-2, from which it is copied in the Quadrilogus, *Materials*, IV, 325-6.

[111] I, 230-239. The hedge-hog is appropriate to St. Thomas because of its quickness, and because it has stiff hair for defence, the roughness of the hair signifying his hard manner of living; the attendants of the king are deformed because they hate spiritual things; Thomas may be said to bear on his back the works of the Apostles because, like them, he endured hardship and finally death; the mist over the earth signifies the darkness which fell upon the consciences of those who opposed the archbishop; the blood refers to the murderous counsels of his enemies; King Henry's garment stands for his temporal power and the crown of fox-tails for the cunning deceits and persuasions to which he gave heed; the folds in the king's garments are evil counsellors, who brought the king a plenteous drink of blood. The account of the vision itself is given in the *Saga* without material change, but with more vivid detail.

[112] *Saga*, I, 239. Herbert (*Materials*, III, 313) records this dream. but gives no interpretation.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this dream is the interpretation. In view of the fact that he had so many enemies, and that there had been such a heated discussion at Northampton, it is only natural that later writers, thinking of his subsequent martyrdom, would feel that there were plots against his life even at this early date.

It would be impossible, within the bounds of this chapter, to include *all* the legendary details connected with the life of Becket. The *Saga*, to mention only one work, is a veritable storehouse of legend. An attempt has been made to include those stories which have the greatest individual interest and are most representative of the body of material involved. The main sources of the legends seem to be: (1) incidents in the life of Becket which probably occurred, such as the escape from drowning, but which in the retelling gained a miraculous element; (2) myths invented to account for some supposed incident which the admirers of the archbishop could not readily explain, such as the mending of his hair coat; (3) actual dreams, the circumstances of which became magnified in the telling, which assumed in the minds of the people a special significance, and in which the original details were modified in later versions to conform more closely to the desired interpretation, such as the first vision at Pontigny; (4) a misunderstanding of a passage in an earlier work, such as the second vision at Pontigny (or Sens).

## V

## LEGENDS OF THE MARTYRDOM

The martyrdom of Becket was naturally the center around which accumulated a large group of legends. It was believed that the murder had been revealed to several persons before the event, and at the time of its occurrence had been miraculously announced in distant places. In the early accounts each event connected with the murder, from its planning to the disposal of the body, took on something of the supernatural.

The future glory of Canterbury was predicted by a monk of Jerusalem, according to Benedict, ten years before the martyrdom.

> For this monk possessed the gift of prophecy, and being filled with the spirit foretold many things which his hearers saw come to pass. One day he saw a pilgrim standing. "Friend," inquired the monk, "whence are you?" "From England," the other answered. Then exclaimed the monk, "O England, England, how pleasant is thy future!" And turning to the stranger, he asked, "Were you ever at Canterbury?" When the other responded that he had never seen that city, the monk exclaimed, "O Canterbury, how agreeable, how delightful is thy future! For behold the days will come when the people will flock to it, as at present they visit St. Aegidius, or St. Jacob, or Rome, or Jerusalem." This pilgrim, when he had returned from Jerusalem, related [the experience] to several persons about ten years before the martyrdom of our holy Father Thomas. Now when he heard that the city of Canterbury was made famous by numerous miracles, he said to his lady, Bertham of Gloucester, a venerable matron, "Do you remember, wife, what I heard from that monk when I was leaving Jerusalem, and reported to you when I returned?" "I well remember," said she. Then the pilgrim added, "Certainly what was spoken to me concerning Canterbury is this day being fulfilled."[1]

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[1] *Materials*, II, 35–36. The same incident is somewhat more fully related in the *Saga*, II, 224–6. There the wife's name is given as Degleotesta.

It is interesting to notice that one of the prophecies of Merlin was interpreted by the dramatist Thomas Heywood as pertaining to Becket:

"'The All-commanding keys shall strive to wrest,
And force the lock that opens to his nest:
But breake their own wards, etc.'

By the *all-commanding keys*, is meant the power of the keys of Rome, who

The approaching death of Becket was foreshown in visions to many people. A clerk of Orleans was especially favoured, for he received three such visions. In the first, he seemed to be in a church, surrounded by disciples, to whom he was reading Lucan. The passage dealt with Cato, who, fleeing from the persecution of Caesar, suffered many privations and incivilities, and finally underwent death in defense of the liberties of his country. When the reader paused before giving his exposition, he heard someone who was kneeling in the church pronounce these words, "Go back, teacher, and explain those two omitted verses." The reader, then, in some confusion, added—

"Sic vobis Scitici mors est ignota Catonis,
In bellis didicit bella timere timor."[2]

The sleeper awoke and remembering the verses he had heard in his dream, began to ponder their meaning After the martyrdom of Thomas, the monk decided it was connected with that event, and that the word *Scitici* referred to the English, either because the love of many of them had waxed cold, or because England is a northern country, and would therefore be designated by a cold region. Three explanations of the verses are offered:

> "O you Scythians, the death of Cato is so unknown to you that you can not understand how, why, and for what purpose the martyr Thomas died, most rigid assertor of the liberty of the church, as Cato for the liberty of the country." Or, "O persecutors of the church, just as the Scythians were not illuminated by the sun of justice, the death of the martyr is so unknown to you, that is, despised by you, that you would try to remove his name from under heaven, and destroy his memory in the future." Or, "The death of the martyr is ignored by you; precious is his death in the eye of the Lord, whom you mark with the inscription of traitor."

In the second vision of the clerk of Orleans, he saw himself

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striving to *force the lock opening to his nest*, that is, his principality and prerogative, *broke their own wards*, which proved true in this Thomas Becket, primate and metropolitan, who was slain in the year 1170." *The Life of Merlin, surnamed Ambrosius* (London, 1813), p. 121. (Originally published in 1641.)

[2] *Materials*, I, 139–140.

in the city of Coutances, looking out over a certain fortification and ditch, into the darkness.

> And behold in the northwest there suddenly sprang up a ray of light in the form of a burning house, which dispelled in part the darkness of night, and growing up gradually like the dawn, it illuminated the sky as though it were the herald of the rising sun. And when an altercation occurred between him and his servant whether the light was that of the sun or of a burning house, suddenly the light burst, so that not only the darkness of the night, but parts of the whole world were illuminated by that wonderful gleaming light.[3]

William of Canterbury, who relates the vision, then explains that the darkness signifies the blindness of the prelates of the church, that a light appeared when the glorious martyr began to defend the liberty of the church, that it was increased when he fled from his country, and that it spread over all the world when his triumph over his enemies was followed by miracles.

In the third vision it seemed that the image of the Crucified Christ in the church of Constantius had come to life, ascended the walls of the city, and was standing balancing the cross on his shoulder, and leaning northward, as if about to spring toward England. The city was in commotion, bewailing the loss of the image. After the death of the martyr, the interpretation of this dream became clear. The man who had experienced the vision recalled the words of the Lord to Peter, "I go to Rome to be crucified," and realized the appropriateness of Christ's turning toward England, where he was to suffer in the person of the Martyr Thomas.[4]

William then relates two visions seen by Fermin of Canterbury, which foreshadow the death and future greatness of the archbishop. In the first one it is shown that the name of Thomas will be recorded in the Book of Life.

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[3] *Materials*, I, 141–2.

[4] *Materials*, I, 142–3. Cf. a vision related by Fitzstephen in *Materials*, III, 150–1, "To a certain religious man Jesus Christ appeared in a nightly vision crucified in that part of the crypt where the earthly remains of the holy Thomas were placed. True indeed, because He suffers in the person of each one of his martyrs, as was shown when He met St. Peter going to Rome to martyrdom, and to the query, 'Lord, where goest thou?' he replied, 'I go to Rome to be crucified afresh.'" This vision, it will be noticed, occurs *after* the martyrdom. Cf. also the second vision of Fermin, on the next page.

> A certain physician of Canterbury, a man of honest life, Fermin by name, ministered to the ill of the brotherhood. At the festival of Pentecost before the passion of the Holy Martyr Thomas he saw in a vision that a solemn procession was made in Canterbury Cathedral, and was followed by a group of brothers, attired in festive clothing, and serving God joyfully and loudly. Lastly on horse and riding together came Henry, King of England, and Thomas, archbishop. And when they had passed the bell-tower as usual in circling the monastery, they were seen to stop, and regard silently a gold cross which was being borne before, from which a triple gold crown hung by a little chain. A voice coming from heaven was heard by those standing about, "The names of all those who can touch this cross, and place on it the purest gold and precious stones, shall be written in the Book of Life." Upon hearing the voice, the archbishop hastening, extended his hand, touched the cross, and placed gold and precious stones in great quantity on the crown. And likewise the king, although a long time afterward, seemed to do the same.[5]

In the second vision Fermin seemed to be in the crypt of the monastery of Canterbury, "where Thomas afterward received the palm of martyrdom." From one end of the crypt to the other were ranged rows of seats, on which sat queens crowned with golden and gem-studded diadems, but with their heads bowed in sadness upon their hands.

> The physician, upon first entering, stood still, awestruck by so many splendors, and astonished at the honor and the multitude of the queens, for the multitude of them exceeded number; but with a companion leading the way, he crossed through the middle of the rows and came to the column where the body of the holy martyr at the beginning of his passion rested buried through the course of many years. As he raised his eyes he saw there a golden cross of wondrous size, and on it a man affixed. Because of the amazement, it was cried aloud, "This one is in beauty above all the sons of men." This was done that the passion of the Lord should be recalled to memory. Then

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[5] *Materials*, I, 143. Abbott notices the less emphatic manner in which the action of the king is presented: "Similiter et rex . . . fecisse visus est." See *St. Thomas of Canterbury: His Death and Miracles* (London, 1898), II, 5. He observes that Fermin must have been present at the public penitence of King Henry in 1174 when the latter promised a large sum of money to the Abbey, and suggests that perhaps the circumstance recalled to the physician some dream about a reconciliation between the King and the Archbishop.

> the physician was commanded by his ductor to record the vision.[6]

Abbott remarks that the lateness of this vision is indicated by the reference to the place where the martyr remained buried for many years, and concludes that William's book has been re-edited here.[7]

Again, a vision seen twelve years before the martyrdom showed Becket raised to the glory of the apostles. This had been misunderstood at the time, and taken to refer to a holy hermit (Robertson suggests St. Godric), but after the murder of Thomas was seen to refer to him.

> A certain youth, Orm by name, having departed from the body, after several days was restored to the body; afterwards he related that he had seen certain wonders during that time, and elicited astonishment from his auditors. Among other things which he reported he told this story, "I was led," he said, "to the supreme order of the saints, and my conductor said, 'Lord, who are those?' And he replied, 'They are the apostles of Christ.' Thereupon I looked and saw among the apostles and martyrs a vacant seat, and I inquired why there was a vacant place, or who would be seated there. And the angel said to me, 'This seat is for a certain priest of England,' " but as the youth was communicating, he ceased to speak; he passed from the body.[8]

Finally, Giraldus Cambrensis relates an incident in which the martyrdom of Becket was portended by the flight of a crucifix.

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[6] *Materials*, I, 144–5. Cf. the third vision of the clerk of Orleans, and the vision, related by Fitzstephen, of Christ crucified in the crypt. Above, p. 110. Abbott refers to a legend reported by William (*Materials*, I, 132), that Thomas, while living, had seen *himself* crucified in the place where he fell. (*St. Thomas of Canterbury*, I, 235, note 3.) He thinks that all of these visions are versions of the same tradition. "There was probably some confusion between (1) 'the Crucified,' (2) 'a man, or the man, crucified,' (3) 'himself crucified.' Of these (1) seems the original."

[7] *Op. cit.*, II, 6.

[8] *Materials*, II, 32. Cf. Herman Corner, who relates the vision briefly and does not give the name of the youth. *Materials*, II, 298 or Eccard, *Corpus Historicum Medii Aevi* (Lipsiae, 1723), II, 746. See also St. Antoninus of Florence, *Praestantissimi Chronicorum* (Lugduni, 1586), ii. 706, Petrus de Natalibus, *Catalogus Sanctorum* (Venice, 1516), fol. 30b, Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, (ed. Graesse; Lipsiae, 1840), p. 68, and Caxton, *The Golden Legend* (Temple Classics; London, 1900), IV, 58.

> There is another example which occurred in the year of martyrdom of the Holy Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the bishopric of Winchester and in the city that is called Stanewic, about two miles from the monastery of Winchelcumb. When a priest of the parish, whose name was Roger, was celebrating the feast of the Ascension by reciting, "Qui pridie" etc., a crucifix, bearing the face and image of the Crucified One, a little larger than a portable (crucifix), although firmly fixed by wedges to a piece of wood which extended behind the altar toward either wall, suddenly tore itself away, rose in flight, and with the sharpened end of wood which extended under the foot of the Crucified One (which formerly stood too little supported), it touched the head and tonsure of the priest. And when it had reached the center of the presbytery, turning toward the altar, it fell backward toward the ground with a great crash, the head extended toward the entrance of the presbytery and the feet toward the altar. But having celebrated the Mass, the deacon raised the cross and placed it back in its place.[9]

Three nights afterward, when the priest and deacon came to the church at daybreak, they found the cross prostrate in the same place. The significance of the miracle was not understood until shortly before the martyrdom of Thomas a priest suggested that the crucifix flying miraculously betokened great approaching insult to the church of Christ and injury to the Crucified One.

In the accounts of the planning of the murder fact and fiction are closely interwoven. The early writers are practically unanimous in saying that when the archbishop of York and the bishops of London and Salisbury visited the king and poured into his ears the story of their excommunication by Becket, the king denounced the archbishop in angry terms, which were interpreted by some of his followers as indicative of his desire for Becket's death. William of Canterbury shows the effect upon the king of letters sent to him by the churchmen just before their arrival.

> Having perceived the tenor [of the letters] he was aroused for a time beyond the moderation of a king. And when he had calmed himself a little, he exclaimed that he had nourished cowards and imbeciles; not one of all his followers grieved because of his misfortunes. . . . "A man who has eaten my bread has lifted up his heel against me. One man, scoffing at my favors,

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[9] *Materials*, II, 109–10.

> dishonors all the family of the king; he treads under foot without opposition the whole kingdom. One man, who first came to court with a cloak for a saddle and riding a lame horse, having deposed the king, in the sight of you attendants, exults triumphing upon the throne." Then he burst forth again and again, "What cowards have I discovered in my court, who care not for the injuries inflicted upon their lord, disregarding insults under the pretext of peace.[10]

Herbert of Bosham, giving the results of the interview between the king and the bishops, says:

> And again and again, inflamed from anger, bursting forth in a dismal voice, he cursed all those he had nourished, who were indebted to him for the favor of intimacy and the revenue from benefits, because they would not vindicate him from one priest, who troubled him and his kingdom, and sought to dismiss and disgrace his dignitaries.[11]

Grim, however, though he quotes the words of the king on this occasion, does not accept full responsibility for their accuracy, and intimates that he is dealing with a common story:

> Surrounded by such people, like one made mad, not able to control himself because of his fury, and ignorant of what would befall, the king is said to have uttered these words repeatedly,[12] "Slothful and miserable men, nourished and advanced in my kingdom, unfaithful to their lord, whom they permit to be so basely insulted by this low clerk."[13]

There can be little doubt, then, in view of the number of authorities, of the king's rage and of some denunciation against the archbishop. Variation in the accounts of the words of the king as they become the basis of popular story, is only natural.

Aroused by the words and the anger of the king, four knights,

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[10] *Materials*, I, 121–2.

[11] *Materials*, III, 487. Cf. Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 128–9; Anon. I, *Materials*, IV, 69; *Materials*, IV, 197–8; Gervase, *Opera Historica* (Rolls Series; London, 1880), I, 224; Vincent Ferrer, *Oeuvres* (ed. Fages, Paris, 1909), II, 244.

[12] "Haec iteratis vicibus dixisse fertur."

[13] *Materials*, II, 429. Cf. Guernes, ll. 5031–35, *Saga*, I, 514–15, and among later chronicles, Thomas de Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa* (Rolls Series, London, 1866; ed. E. A. Bond), I, 194–5; and Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1807), II, 134.

Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard Breton, thinking they were carrying out the royal will, plotted the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Early writers, as Dean Stanley has noted, attempted to find even in the names of the knights an evil significance.[14] Fitz-Urse was "son of the Bear," and was "like unto beasts in his cruelty";[15] Hugh of Morville was "of the thorp of the dead, and in truth, he is now a death's man";[16] Richard Brito, from the depravity of his life, "has been called 'the Brute.'"[17] William de Tracy, whose name alone defied analysis, was admitted to be brave in battle, but "his wickedness involved even parricide."[18] The plot of the knights, says Guernes, with more eye to poetry than to fact, was made and an oath taken by them to slay the archbishop, in the same room in which the daughter of William, Duke of Normandy, had been pledged to Harold, and in which the leaders of the army pledged allegiance to the Bastard, before the expedition against England.[19]

The *Late Quadrilogus* gives a different setting for the formation of the plot.

> Having gone out from the face of the king, instigated and led by the devil, to whose service they were committed, they met under a tree, swearing and banding themselves together to kill the Anointed of the Lord. When they had withdrawn after this detestable and horrible conference, bound by a nefarious oath, that tree soon received the curse which the Lord, as it is written in the Gospels, brought upon a sterile tree. For in the sight of the disciples, that tree withered up as soon as the anathema had been pronounced; so that, dried up from its roots to its summit, it thereupon bore neither foliage nor fruit, just as this accursed one, which covered with its branches those wicked men, and ministered with its shade to those evil ones.[20]

E. A. Abbott suggests that the origin of this legend may be the statement of William of Canterbury (in *Materials*, I, 130) that when the four knights went out from the presence of the *archbishop*, they threw their coats under a mulberry tree, preparatory to slaying him.[21] But even without such a misunderstanding of William's account, the medieval mind, filled with Biblical stories, could hardly be expected to overlook such an opportunity to draw a parallel between the life of Christ and that of Thomas.

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[14] *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* (2nd American from 11th London ed.) p. 80.

[15] *Saga*, I, 515. Cf. William of Canterbury, *Materials*, I, 128.

[16] *Saga*, I, 515.

[17] *Materials*, I, 129. The writer of the *Saga* also has the play on words in mind when he says, "Richard Brito, a rough fellow and full of wickedness, having now become from a rational being, worse than the beast." I, 515–17.

[18] *Materials*, I, 128–9.

[19] Ll. 5096–5100.

[20] *Materials*, IV, 385, note 3.

The four knights then set out by different routes for England. The king, suspicious because of their sudden disappearance from his court, sent messengers to recall them, but they could not be overtaken.[22] Grim and Gervase say that they landed near Dover, in a place called "Port of Dogs," and Grim emphasizes the appropriateness of such a landing place.[23] Guernes, however, says that two landed at Dover and two at Winchelsea.[24] They assembled at the archbishop's castle at Saltwood, about six miles from Canterbury, a castle then occupied by the De Brocs, by whom the knights were welcomed. Here they spent the entire night plotting the death of the archbishop;[25] according to Guernes they extinguished the candles and devised their infamous plot in total darkness.[26]

Becket had not been unwarned of his danger. When he was preparing to leave the French shores, the pilot of a boat which had come from England warned him that as soon as he arrived on English soil his enemies would lay hands on him.[27] In the midst of his triumphant reception in Southwark a mad woman named Matilda attracted the attention of the crowd by calling out repeatedly, "Archbishop, beware of the knife!"[28] Later, according to the *Saga*, a knight who had crossed the sea with Fitz-Urse and his companions revealed the conspiracy to the archbishop's cellarer, who informed Becket.[29] Also, Reginald, one of the archbishop's own household, brought the news that the four knights had landed and were sitting in consultation in Canterbury.[30]

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[21] *Op. cit.*, I, 242, note 8.
[22] Grim, *Materials*, II, 429.
[23] *Ibid.*, Gervase, *Opera Historica* (Rolls Series), I, 224.
[24] Ll. 5146–47.
[25] Herbert, *Materials*, III, 488.
[26] Ll. 5153–4.
[27] Herbert, *Materials*, III, 472–3; *Saga*, I, 487.
[28] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 123.

The story of the murder has often been told, and need not be repeated in detail here.[31] In an interview with the archbishop the four knights demanded that he absolve the excommunicated bishops, and when he refused they retreated, crying, "To arms! To arms!" In the interim before their reappearance John of Salisbury remonstrated with his master, and urged that he adopt a more conciliatory attitude.[32] The knights, fully armed and crazed with anger, re-entered the cathedral and found the archbishop in the north transept, which still bears the name of "The Martyrdom." The clerks all fled except Robert of Merton, Fitzstephen, and Edward Grim, and finally even these, except Grim, deserted him. Again the knights demanded the absolution of the bishops and again were refused. Then they attempted to drag him from the church, and in the struggle, Becket shook off Fitz-Urse so violently that he recoiled backward.[33] The knights then abandoned the attempt to remove him by force, and Fitz-Urse approached the archbishop with drawn sword. Becket using a violent epithet reminded the knight of the homage which the latter owed him, and Fitz-Urse in fury waved his sword crying, "Strike!" The archbishop, realizing that his moment had come, joined his hands and commended his cause to God, to St. Mary, and to the martyr St. Denis. Fitz-Urse himself seems to have struck the first blow, which removed the "cap" and a portion of the skull at the same time. Grim, who had tried to intercept the blow, fell to the floor with his arm wounded. The archbishop remained standing until the third blow of the knights, and then fell, uttering in a low voice the following words: "For the name of Jesus and the protection of the Church I am prepared to embrace death."[34]

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[29] I, 518–20. The *Saga* seems to be the only source for the details of the story of this rumor and the one which follows (as Magnusson has noted), but compare the general statement in Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 130.

[30] *Saga*, I, 520.

[31] Especial mention may be made of Dean Stanley's account in *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, that of W. H. Hutton in his *Thomas Becket* (Cambridge, 1926), and that of E. A. Abbott in his *St. Thomas of Canterbury: His Death and Miracles* (London, 1898).

[32] Benedict, *Materials*, II, 9.

[33] Guernes, ll. 5519–20.

At the time he received the blows of the assassins, Becket was standing with his back to a pillar (Grim, Guernes) or in front of a solid wall (William, Gervase), having on his right hand the altar of St. Benedict and on his left that of the Holy Virgin.[35] Gervase tells us that later the pillar which had stood in the middle of the transept and the vault above it, were removed that the altar erected on the place of the martyrdom might be seen more freely. The altar of which he speaks was the altar of the Swords' Point, which was not there at the time of the martyrdom.[36] The tradition arose, however, through inaccuracy on the part of some of the writers, that Becket was slain while he was praying before the altar. John of Salisbury says the archbishop was "in front of the altar."[37] Herbert thus describes the scene.

> And now at this time that sacred blood began to spread over the face. So perceiving (this), that Priest of the Most High, sacrificing himself to the Most High, already an incomplete sacrifice, straightway pulling off the cap which he had been accustomed to wear on his head, raising his eyes to heaven, and with bent knee, in the manner of prayer, his hands joined before him, in the temple before the altar, the priest offered himself up as a living sacrifice to God.[38]

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[34] Grim, *Materials*, II, 437.

[35] Grim, *Materials*, II, 436; Guernes, ll. 5551–5555; William, *Materials*, I, 132; Gervase, *Opera Historica*, I, 11. Cf. Anon. I, "near an altar of St. Benedict," *Materials*, IV, 76. See also A. J. Mason, *What became of the Bones of St. Thomas* (Cambridge, 1920), p. 63, in which the versions are compared, and Abbott, *op. cit.*, I, 96.

[36] A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

[37] *Materials*, II, 319.

[38] *Materials*, III, 498. Cf. *Materials*, VII, 431; Ralph de Diceto, *Opera Historica* (Rolls Series), I, 344; and Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* (Rolls Series), II, 281. The *Saga* mentions the altar twice, I, 543. The Middle English hymn about the murder of Becket, beginning "lysten lordynges, both gret & small," contains the following lines,

"Beffore ye auter he kneled down,
& than they pared his Crown."

This song is printed by E. Flügel in *Anglia*, XXVI, 255–6 and in his *Neuenglisches Lesebuch* (Halle, 1895), p. 113; by R. Dyboski, in *E. E. T. S.*, Ex. Ser., CI (1908), 31; and by T. Wright, *Songs and Carols* (Warton Club; London, 1856), pp. 66–8.

In spite of the fact that many accounts give the tradition of Becket's being murdered before the altar, there is no uniformity as to which altar it was. The *Saga*, for example, says it was the "altar of our lady, God's mother";[39] but some chronicles specify the altar of St. Benedict.[40] The traditions may be partly accounted for, as Dean Stanley observes, from the circumstance that a wooden altar was later erected, as we have seen, on the site of the murder. This posthumous altar is represented as standing there at the time of the martyrdom and was confused with the altar within the Chapel of St. Benedict, the altar of the Holy Virgin, or even the High Altar.[41]

Paintings frequently reflected the tradition of Becket's being murdered before the altar. One such painting, from a Norman French Psalter of the thirteenth century, is reproduced by both Abbott and Hutton.[42] A reproduction of an illumination of the fourteenth century is given in Joseph Strutt's *The Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England*.[43] Here Becket is standing before the altar, with his back to two assailants, one of whom has his sword thrown back ready to strike. Dean Stanley described a painting in Canterbury Cathedral, at the head of the tomb of King Henry IV.

> There is the common mistake of making the archbishop kneel at the altar, and of representing Grim, with his blood-stained arm, as the bearer of the cross. The knights are carefully distinguished from one another. Bret, with boars' heads embroidered on his surcoat, is in the act of striking. Tracy appears to have already dealt a blow; and the bloody stains are visible on his sword, to mark the "primus percussor." Fitz-Urse, with bears on his coat, is

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[39] I, 543.

[40] See, for example, Matthew Paris, *loc. cit.; Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Stevenson (Rolls Series; London, 1875), p. 16; and *Chronicon Johannis Iperii*, in E. Martène and U. Durand, *Thesaurus Novus Anecdoturum*, III (Paris, 1717), col. 657.

[41] *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 120. For an example of a later version mentioning the altar, see P. Ribadeneira, *The Lives of Saints*, trans. W. Petre (2nd ed., 1730). Another eighteenth century account describes the murder as occurring "as he stood officiating at the altar." *A Most Learned and Eloquent Speech . . . taken out of the Introduction to Lilly's Grammar* (London, 1722), pp. 22–3.

[42] Abbott, *op. cit.*, frontispiece; Hutton, *op. cit.*, facing p. 266.

[43] London, 1842, p. 17.

"stirring the brains" of his victim, holding his sword with both hands perpendicularly, thus taking the part sometimes ascribed to him, though really belonging to Mauclerc.[44]

In a painting discovered in the church of the Holy Cross at Stratford-on-Avon, the archbishop is represented as celebrating Mass, and having his back turned to the murderers.[45] The seal of John Stratford shows the archbishop kneeling at the altar, likewise with his back to the assailants.[46] Erasmus speaks of a sculpture over the south porch at Canterbury Cathedral, where he saw the figures of "the three murderers," with the names "Tusci, Fusci, and Berri," underneath.[47]

Through inaccuracy or suppression of detail, as well as more or less unconscious magnification of a hero, the martyrdom is transformed, in many accounts, into a scene in which all the elements of struggle are lost, and becomes simply a slaughter of an unresisting priest. A letter of William of Sens to Pope Alexander, for example, says,

> And that priest of the Most High, standing before the altar, and holding in his hands the cross, which he had been accustomed to bear before him, and praying, voluntarily offered himself between the ends of the cross and the altar an unresisting sacrifice to God.[48]

There is considerable discrepancy in the various accounts as to who struck the first blow. This question has been examined exhaustively by Abbott, who assembles all the evidence and concludes that the first blow was given by Fitz-Urse.[49] What seems to be the truth, as Abbott has said, is that a blow struck by Fitz-Urse appeared to some of those standing by merely to strike off the archbishop's cap, whereas in reality it also inflicted a wound.[50] William and Guernes seem to be misled by Tracy's inaccurate boast that he had cut off John of Salisbury's arm.[51] But the mistake that De Tracy was the one who inflicted the first injury resulted in a tradition which has been repeated many times in both historical and literary accounts.[52]

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[44] *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 132.

[45] F. J. Baigent, "On the Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and other Paintings discovered at St. John's Church, Winchester, A. D. 1853." *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, X (1854), 73–4.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 133. It is such statues and paintings, perhaps, that are responsible for statements like the following, from C. Cahier, *Caracteristiques des Saints dans L'Art Populaire* (Paris, 1867), I, 365: "Il fut tué *au pied de l'autel* par *trois* chevaliers qui pensaient obtenir ainsi la faveur du roi Henri II. . . . ." (Italics mine)

[48] *Materials*, VII, 431. Cf. the passages cited as mentioning the altar.

Led by the ever-present desire to find similarities between the passion of the Lord and that of Becket, one of the anonymous writers records that when Grim attempted to shield his master from the sword, the archbishop reproved him. Such an incident is mentioned by none of the more authoritative authors, and is a good example of legend arising out of the enthusiasm of devotees.

> When therefore he was about to receive the stroke of the sword, one of the clerks leaped forward, Edward by name, surnamed Grim, and as though emulating the confidence of St. Peter in defending his master, having wrapped his arm with his cloak, he boldly threw it before the uplifted swords, shouting to the knights to spare the Archbishop. His undertaking, however, although pious, the High Priest of Christ prohibited as wrong, and (as if mindful of that inhibition with which the Lord spoke to Peter, when he had cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest, "Put back your sword in its sheath; must I not drink the cup which the Father hath given to me?") he said, "Cease, brother! the Lord desires not this defence."[53]

Obviously, the comparison between Peter striking off the ear of the servant of Caiaphas and Grim interposing his arm to ward off a blow directed at the archbishop is rather lame!

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[49] *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, I, 139–144.

[50] That Fitz-Urse struck the first blow is also the view taken by J. H. Ramsay, *The Angevin Empire* (London, 1903), p. 135. This detail is given correctly in *The South English Legendary*, ed. H. Thiemke, *Palaestra*, CXXXI (1919), ll. 2151–8, and in Holinshed's *Chronicles* (London, 1807), II, 136.

[51] William of Canterbury, *Materials*, I, 134.

[52] See for example, Stanley, *op. cit.*, pp. 106–7; Thomas Fuller, *History of the Worthies of England* (ed. P. A. Nuttall; London, 1840), I, 558; George Darley, *Thomas à Becket* (1840); Aubrey De Vere, *St. Thomas of Canterbury* (London, 1876); and Tennyson's *Becket*. In George Wightwick's *Henry the Second* (London, 1851) the facts of the murder are curiously distorted. (Act III, Scene 4, p. 58). There is a general struggle between the priests and the knights. Moreville strikes down Becket with his club, and the archbishop is lost sight of in the crowd, while the knights escape.

[53] Anon. II, *Materials*, IV, 130.

Several traditions deal with the stones of the pavement on which Becket fell when he was killed. The *Saga* says that as he stood in the transept

> . . . the very marble rendered itself soft to the footsteps of the archbishop, as if he had stood in snow or some other yielding matter. As an everlasting testimony of this these footprints may still be seen, and now receive many a kiss amid the devotion of kneeling pilgrims.[54]

A smiliar tradition is recorded by Battely. "It is commonly said that the stones of the pavement on which (the Archbishop) fell down dead, have the marks of his fall, and are stained with his blood."[55] A small square may still be seen in the pavement of the cathedral, where a piece of stone has apparently been removed and another inserted. Tradition says that the original stone, being the one which his head touched, was cut out and sent to Rome with some blood-stained scraps, and was deposited in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, where it is still supposedly preserved as a relic.[56] But the investigations of antiquarians have failed to discover this stone, and the story about it is a nineteenth century product. Furthermore, the general opinion now is that all the present pavement is of a later date than the murder of Becket. Another story, perhaps more credible, states that Benedict, when appointed Abbot of Peterborough in 1177, in order to replenish the relics of his church, carried away the stones "on which the holy martyr fell," and had them made into two altars.[57]

Supernatural manifestations began, according to some of the accounts, immediately after the murder. The marble, says the *Saga*, grew soft and formed into small cups to contain the blood, so that it might the more easily be preserved.[58] When the men had gathered into a chalice the brains and blood of the murdered archbishop, and were carrying it unto the altar, "the Holy Ghost descendeth upon it in the likeness of a dove."[59] Healings immediately began to occur. A certain blind man, who belonged to the household of the archbishop, ran and touched his eyes with the blood of the slain one, and immediately received his sight.[60] A dumb man saw in a vision that if he would touch his tongue with the blood of the archbishop, it would be loosed. The same vision was revealed to a friend of the dumb man, and the two proceeded to Canterbury. When they reached that city, the authenticity of the visions was confirmed by the news that the archbishop had been killed. They asked that some of the blood of the martyr be given them, and when it had been applied, the dumb man received his speech.

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[54] I, 541. Abbott speculates concerning the origin of this tradition. Probably, he says, some marks were made in the stone to indicate the exact spot where the Archbishop fell. "These (perhaps under the influence of some poetic tradition how 'the very stones were softer than the hearts of his murderers and received the imprint of his feet') may have led to the conclusion that St. Thomas's feet actually left miraculous footprints on the Cathedral." *Op. cit.*, I, 114–15.

[55] Supplement to Somner, p. 22, quoted by J. C. Robertson, "Becket Memoranda," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, X (1876), 13.

[56] *Op. cit.*, p. 11; S. A. Warner, *Canterbury Cathedral* (London, 1923), pp. 81–2; Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

[57] Robert of Swapham, *Coenobii Burgensis Historia*, in Spark's collection, p. 101, quoted by J. C. Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

Edward Grim, who had sacrificed his arm in the cause of the archbishop, naturally became the subject of a miracle. The *Saga* says, "the great wound which the clerk Edward received was whole and healed before the body of the archbishop was cold on the floor."[61] The miracle is also related in one of the late manuscripts of Grim, but it places the healing a year after the murder. The martyr is represented as appearing to Grim in a vision and pronouncing the arm whole. Afterward Grim wraps the arm in a rag dipped in holy water and the archbishop's blood, and it becomes whole. He gives as testimony to the healing the fact that he has used the hand of that arm in writing the account.[62] It is probable, as Abbott suggests, that we have here the clue to the origin of the miracle.[63] The medieval mind seems to have inquired, "How could Grim write if his arm had practically been severed?" It is no more than poetic justice that the man who had suffered for his master when others had fled should be rewarded in the healing of his arm. The *Saga* is even more poetic than the other account in making the healing follow immediately, but such an alteration is what one would naturally expect in a later version.

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[58] I, 551.

[59] *Saga*, I, 553.

[60] This and the following miracle are found in *Materials*, IV, 199. Cf. Archbishop of Sens, *Materials*, VII, 431, note 13.

[61] I, 553.

[62] *Materials*, II, 288.

[63] *Op. cit.*, II, 288.

All Nature was sympathetic at the time of Becket's sufferings. Says Fitzstephen,

> And just as formerly for Christ, because of his patience in his own body, so now likewise for Thomas, because of his patience in fighting, the sun hid its face, obscured its rays, and darkened the day, that it should not see this crime; the sky suddenly produced great tempests, rain fell violently, and it thundered from heaven. Afterward a great redness of the sky spread forth, in token of the shedding of blood, in horror of the shameful deed, in swiftness of vengeance upon those desperate ones who had shown themselves so wicked, and depraved themselves with this sin-offering, and who were raised up to be the cause of his death, hated and shunned by the gentleness of all human nature.[64]

Anonymous X also speaks of the redness in the sky, and says that though the monks observed it, they did not at first consider it miraculous.[65] But a few days later there arrived the prior of Ely, who told them that on the day of the passion, when he was at Rouen, he had seen a great redness in the sky, and that many people believed it to be a miracle. In view of the fact that the murder took place about five p. m. on December 29,[66] or as Abbott says, about an hour after sunset,[67] it is difficult to accept Fitzstephen's statement about the sun darkening the day. Dean Stanley thinks the redness was caused by an aurora borealis.[68] Abbott, rejecting this explanation, thinks we have here simply another error arising "from metaphorical language drawing a parallel between the martyrdom of Thomas and the crucifixion of Christ."[69] A writer of *Flores Historiarum* speaking of Christmas night, 1172, says that "thundering in

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[64] *Materials*, III, 142–3.
[65] *Materials*, IV, 439.
[66] *Materials*, II, 19.
[67] *Op. cit.*, I, 24, note 17.
[68] *Op. cit.*, p. 114.
[69] *Loc. cit.*

England, Ireland, and the whole country of France, was general, sudden, and horrible, so that manifestly the blood of the Holy Thomas seemed to be crying in groans to God."[70]

Miracles were associated with the state of the body after the murder, and accidental circumstances were interpreted as supernatural. When the body was raised up, two instruments of iron, a hammer and a halberd, were found under it. The *Saga* offers the following explanation:

> . . . even as our Lord Jesus Christ ransomed the holy church from the power and warring of the devil, whereof these tools may be taken as emblems, in the same manner she is to be understood now to have been redeemed from the thraldom of worldly lords in the fall and the blood of this martyr.[71]

Many writers speak of the appearance of the body, and the preservation of beauty in it after death. Herbert dwells at length upon this matter.

> And (a marvel to tell and a miracle worthy of the greatest admiration of his courage to God), after such a violent death, after such hard blows of the swords, where the piece of scalp with the tonsure was separated from the head, after such a flow of blood, and indeed after such loss of blood all night, after all this his face was not more pale, more wasted away, nor were the wrinkles on the forehead furrowed more deeply, nor the pupils of the eyes more contracted, nor the eyes more closed, nor the neck more consumed, nor the shoulder more drooped, nor the finger more rigid, nor the skin more loose. And finally, in no part of the body could I perceive any diminution or enfeebling proving by the living condition of the dead body that the last drawing of breath of this holy man was not his destruction.[72]

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[70] Ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series), II, 84. Cf. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* (Rolls Series), II, 285.

[71] I, 553.

[72] *Materials*, III, 519–20. William of Canterbury says that his appearance in death exhibited a certain joyfulness and sancity so that he seemed not to have died, but merely to be sleeping, and adds, "But the flexibility of the fingers, the arrangement of the members, the joyfulness and grace of the countenance, proclaimed the glorified man, in the case that either his life or the cause of his passion should remain silent." *Materials*, I, 135–6. Cf. *Saga*, I, 555.

Benedict adds two more details regarding the appearance of the body:

> He lay with the blood encircling the head in the form of a diadem, perhaps as a sign of his sanctity, but the face appeared to be quite free from blood, with the exception of one small stream, which descended from the right side of his forehead across his nose to the left side of his face. He appeared afterward with that sign in vision to many who did not know of this circumstance, but who described it as if they had seen it with their own eyes.[73]

Herbert gives a legend undoubtedly originating from a sense of poetic fitness and a desire to draw a parallel between the martyrdom of Becket and the Crucifixion. In the plunder of the palace after the murder, the knights discovered two haircloths among the effects of the archbishop, which they cast aside. "Afterward most of the band, with the centurion of the gospel, but silently because of fear, said to themselves, 'Truly this was a just man.' And so beating their breasts they returned."[74]

During the night many miracles attested the dignity and saintliness of the one who had just been killed. The Archbishop of Sens wrote to the Pope that when the candles around the body became extinct, they were lighted again of themselves.[75] He adds as a greater miracle that when all the funeral rites had been completed around the body, and it had been placed on a bier in the choir, the archbishop raised his right hand and gave the benediction.[76] Another account represents the whole body as having raised itself up, and then after making the sign of the cross, falling back to earth.[77] Abbott conjectures that the legend may have originated from a confusion of the statement that when the Martyr fell to the ground, he signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and a metaphorical saying that when the body was raised from the ground it brought upon itself and those standing about, the blessing of heaven.[78]

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[73] *Materials*, II, 15. Cf. *South English Legendary*, (ed. H. Thiemke, *Palestra*, CXXXI (1919), 11. 2177–2184.

[74] *Materials*, III, 513. Cf. Luke xxiii, 48. Anonymous V may be relating a confused version of the same tradition when he says, "Afterward the monks removing some of his garments, found underneath a very rough hair shirt, and his body dreadfully lacerated and full of vermin; and upon seeing this certain of the malefactors beat their breasts." *Materials*, IV, 199. But see Abbott, *op. cit.*, I, 239, note 2.

[75] *Materials*, VII, 431, note 13. Cf. the miracle related in the *Saga*, that "four times a heavenly light appeared over his altar, so that therewith candles were lit which stood there without lights before." II, 227.

[76] Hoveden repeats this legend, but says that the archbishop raised his *left* hand. *The Annals of Roger de Hoveden*, trans. Henry T. Riley (London, 1853), I, 338. The legend is used in the play of C. T. Winter (London, 1879), Act V, Scene 4.

Most of the later sources repeat the following legend from Herman Corner:

> But when the clerks and monks in his funeral obsequies began the *Requiem aeternam*, a choir of angels standing near began the office of a martyr, singing *Laetabitur justus;* and then the clerks followed this office.[79]

The *Saga*, which omits this miracle, relates another as a mark of divine favor and a source of joy to the monks and clerks, "for that same night there sprang up through a stone in the crypt a fair and desirable spring which sithence is called Thomas's well."[80]

The death of the archbishop, according to the early accounts, was revealed in distant places by visions and miracles. Sometimes the announcement was not understood until after the actual news of the event had been obtained, but such a slight detail was not allowed to detract from the wonder of the revelation or from its worth as a mark of divine favor. One such announcement, made through a child in Devonshire, is reported by Giraldus Cambrensis.

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[77] *Materials*, II, 289; IV, 199.

[78] *Op. cit.*, I, 239. Robert Southey, in his *Book of the Church*, mentions another miracle of the body. "His eyes, which had been injured by the blows of the assassins, miraculously disappeared and were replaced by others, smaller in size, and of two different colors." (2nd ed., London, 1824), I, 255. I have searched in vain for the source of this legend.

[79] *Materials*, II, 298. Cf. *Materials*, II, 292. For repetitions of the legend see St. Antoninus of Florence, *Praestantissimi Chronicorum*, Secunda Pars (London, 1586), II, 707; Vincent Ferrer, *Oevres* (trans. Fages; Paris, 1909), II, 244; Petrus de Natalibus, *Catalogus Sanctorum* (Venice, 1516), p. 31a. Most versions of *The Golden Legend* seem to contain it. For example, see *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Graesse (Lipsiae, 1840), p. 68; *La Legende Dorée* (Jean Bataille's version), n.d., xxvii b—xxviii a; and William Caxton's translation (Temple Classics; London, 1900), II, 197.

[80] I, 557.

> Likewise, in remote parts of the island of England, that is, in the borders of Devon, on the same evening that the holy man perished by the swords of the wicked, [the event was known] by a certain soldier, named Wido de Brionna. When he was sitting and eating with his family at the table, his son, a boy about seven years of age, who was playing about the table, suddenly turning to his father burst out in these words, "Are you unaware, father, that a good priest has just died?" He and those who heard of this incident from the chaplain of the district, who was sitting with the others at the table, thought it was just childish prattle. And after a little, about the middle of the meal, the boy running to his father repeated the words; there followed laughter by all, and jesting words spoken to the chaplain. Also a third time, immediately after the meal was finished, the boy ran to the knees of his father and embracing them with tears, said, "Father, the high priest[81] is dead, and already buried. Is not that cause for grief and sorrow to all?" But the majority of the hearers still regarded the incident as matter for jesting with the chaplain. The father and mother, indeed, because of the words repeated so often by their boy, considered the thing silently, and conferred with one another in astonishment. Though this province was most remote from Canterbury, yet the report was spread by bad men and reached even here within the seventh or eighth day. Immediately all who had heard of this incident gave praise to God, who raised up the spirit of this young and innocent boy as a means of revealing this [news] so wonderfully in the same hour.[82]

The Pope knew of the martyrdom immediately after it occurred, according to Caxton's translation of *The Golden Legend*, by a miracle which Becket had prophesied when he was in the presence of the Pope.

> And after S. Thomas said mass tofore the pope in a white chasuble; and after mass he said to the pope that he knew by revelation that he should suffer death for the right of holy church, and when it should fall that chasuble should be turned from white into red. . . .[83]
> Now after that S. Thomas departed from the pope, the pope would daily look upon the white chasuble that S. Thomas had said mass in, and the same day that he was martyred he saw it turned into red, whereby he knew well that

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[81] "Sacerdos optimus."

[82] *Materials*, II, 285; also *Materials*, IV, 411 and Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. F. Dimock (Rolls Series), VII, 54ff.

[83] Ed. F. S. Ellis (Temple Classics; London, 1900), II, 192. This legend occurs also in Add. MS. 11565 (British Museum).

> that same day he suffered martrydom for the right of holy church, and commanded a mass of requiem solemnly to be sung for his soul.[84]

Hoveden tells us that the passion of Thomas was revealed on the same day to Godric the anchorite, at Finchale, which was more than a hundred and sixty miles distant from Canterbury.[85] The fact that Godric had died six months before would naturally have little weight to the believers in supernatural manifestations connected with the murder of the archbishop.[86]

The martyrdom was revealed in a vision to an inhabitant of Argentam on the night before the news reached that place, according to Benedict.[87] Suddenly a voice sounded in his ears crying loudly, "Behold, my blood calls more loudly to God for justice than the blood of Abel who was killed at the beginning of the world." The man was terrified, not knowing what the vision portended. He related his riddle to several, without receiving any solution. But

> while they were talking and questioning one another, there entered one who asserted that the lord of Canterbury had been killed in his own church. Whereupon, astonished and turning to him who had recited his dream, they said, "This is the voice which you heard crying aloud, for doubtless this innocent blood cries from afar to God in great strength."

According to Herbert, the martyrdom was known at Jerusalem through a vision, within fifteen days of the saint's death. When the Patriarch of Jerusalem journeyed to England to secure military aid against the heathens in the Holy Land, he related the following incident:

> In that country there is a convent, in which one of the brothers, of great purity and holiness of life from his youth, on that day on which St. Thomas

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[84] *Op. cit.*, pp. 196–7. Perhaps this legend is related to the one mentioned by Charles Cahier: "on raconte que la Mère de Dieu lui avait apporté du ciel une chasuble rouge, comme présage du martyre qu'il devait endurer pour la defense des libertés de l'Eglise." *Caractéristiques des Saints dans l'Art Populaire* (Paris, 1867), I, 206.

[85] *Annals*, trans. H. A. Riley (London, 1853), pp. 337–8.

[86] Godric died on May 21, 1170. Reginald, *Libellus de Vita et Miraculis S. Godrici* (Surtees Society, Vol. XX, London, 1847), p. 326.

[87] *Materials*, II, 29–30. Cf. *Saga*, pp. 25–27.

died became extremely ill. And when his spirit seemed about to depart, the abbot ran to the brother, whom he loved above all the others because of his holiness, with whom he was more familiar, and consequently for whom he felt great compassion. And when he perceived the sick man already laboring in his last extremity, he besought him in a fatherly manner and with tears, that when he reached heaven, he should remember the one whom he had so long esteemed in life, and by whom he had been so much esteemed, and should, if God permitted, assure him concerning his state. The brother assented; he died, and within a few days according to his promise returned full of joy to the abbot and announced that he had seen the Lord and received the reward of eternal life. Said he, "In order that you may have no doubts, I know that immediately after I had departed from the body, I was carried by angels to the presence of the Lord. Soon there came a great and eminent one, with a wondrous procession following him, and surrounded by a countless multitude of angels, patriarchs, and prophets, with a glorious choir of apostles, and an innumerable army of saints, martyrs, and confessors clad in purple and white. He stood before the Lord in the appearance of a martyr, with head all wounded, and with blood, as it seemed, gradually flowing through the fissures of the wounds. To him the Lord said, 'Thomas, it is fitting for you thus to enter the court of the Lord.' And he added, 'As great glory as I gave to Peter, give I unto you.' And then the Lord took a gold crown of marvelous size, and placed it on his broken and wounded head." And the dead brother, who was talking, added, "I knew therefore of a certain that this Thomas, the great priest of Canterbury, was killed on this day and had gone to the Lord. And you meanwhile note what I have said to you as a temporal sign. For after a short time has elapsed, it will be confirmed to you by the relation of many travelers. And you through the death of the glorious martyr, which I have prophesied to you, do not doubt concerning my safety, especially when it will soon be brought to you through others, that what I have prophesied has been completed." And having said these things he disappeared . . .[88]

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[88] *Materials*, III, 514–517, or IV, 411. The same version is found in *The South English Legendary*, ll. 2339–2362 (ed. Thiemke, *Palaestra*, CXXXI); Mirk's *Festial*, ed. T. Erbe (London, 1905), *E. E. T. S.*, E. S., XCVI, 42–43; Laurentius Wade, ed. C. Horstmann, *Englische Studien*, III (1880), lines 2045–2072. For a slightly different version, briefer and omitting the request of the abbot to the dying monk, see Giraldus Cambrensis in *Opera*, VII, 54 or *Materials*, II, 284–5. The dreamer in this version seems himself to be carried away into heaven, where he sees St. Thomas, to whom Christ makes a sign for him to take a seat upon his right. The chronicler adds that when the first pilgrims arrived from England with the news, the time of the martyrdom and the time of the vision were found to correspond.

A parallel to this vision is that related by Benedict, in which a monk of Lewis sees St. Thomas raised to the glory of the apostles.

> On the eighth day after the martyr was killed, a brother dead many days before appeared to a certain monk of the cloister of Lewis. Remembering him whom he had seen dead, he inquired diligently, among many other things which he asked, concerning the state of the Lord of Canterbury recently killed. He who stood near discoursed at length upon his praise and glory, and concluded that he appeared with the Holy Virgin Mary and the holy apostles and with certain of the martyrs and confessors and virgins before the great gold throne, which had two doors that opened and closed. Then there came from the throne a figure handsome above all the sons of men, by the sight of whom the faithful are glorified and live, and embraced the holy Thomas, saluted him with a kiss, and bowed to receive his benediction; afterward the martyr was accepted among the saints, and reverently seated among the apostles. But he who heard this, filled with wonder and desire to know why the martyr was accorded a worthier seat than the other martyrs, especially the protomartyr Stephen, and the saints Laurence and Vincent; it was responded that he was of a worthier grade and order; furthermore, each one of them endured martyrdom for his own sake, but the lord of Canterbury died for the universal cause of the church; besides, other martyrs have been killed by heathens, this one has been destroyed by his own people.[89]

A vision predicting the glory which would be accorded the martyr was vouchsafed also to a young boy. Benedict thus relates the incident:

> A few nights having elapsed after the extinguishing of our Sun, a boy of innocent years, and entirely free of suspicion of lying is seen before a multitude of diverse sex and orders, in the choir of the church of Canterbury. He saw the martyr without the breath of life above the altar of Christ, clothed in silk raiment, and beneath his head nothing less than a pillow of silk. A reverend person in the habit of a monk held up the head of the martyr in both his hands; and suddenly two small wands appeared to spring up, as if from one tree, from either side of the martyr, which little by little reached to the roof of the church, and threatened to penetrate it. And all stood around, gazing upon the wands rapidly rising, and wondering much, and he said who sat in the habit of a monk, "Why do you stand gazing in wonder at this sight?

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[89] *Materials*, II, 31–32. Cf. the vision of Orm, which preceded the martyrdom (above, p. 112).

These wands presage the fame and glory of this martyr. For just as you see them rising unto heaven, so the glory of the saint shall rise before God and be multiplied; indeed they shall spread aloft, and their limbs shall spread into the whole earth, and there shall be no end to the length of them."[90]

One of the most interesting of the visions connected with the martyrdom is that of a priest of Wretham, in which an English anthem is sung to Thomas as a martyr. As Abbott suggests, it must antedate the canonization of Thomas in 1173.[91] It seems to be an expression of the enshrinement of Becket in the hearts of the people as a martyr and a saint which anticipated the formal canonization.

There was a certain Reginald, in the village of Wretham, twenty miles from the city of Norwich, who filled the office of a priest. He had a vision, in which it seemed that he entered into a chapel to hear divine service. And he found monks in white standing before the choir, who after completing the nocturn, were beginning the commemoration of the saints. When this was finished, the brother who stood on the south (side of the altar) signed with his hand to the one who stood on the north, to make a memorial to the Martyr Thomas. As the sign was not understood, he said aloud that an antiphon should be sung to the Martyr. The other replied that it was not authentic, for the Martyr had not been written in the catalogue of the martyrs by the pope. "At least," said the first, "let it be sung in English." Then they raised aloft the melody of the hymn of a martyr. As the priest knelt in prayer, the hymn was again given by the heavenly host. After it had been finished, the brother who had insisted that the song be sung, led Reginald aside, and said to him, "You have heard, brother, our antiphon. Go tell it to him who is over the weak brothers of the church of Canterbury." "Lord," he replied, "I do not know it." "I will say it to you," replied the other, and he repeated it again. The clerk, therefore, after the third recital which he heard in his sleep, held it carefully in his memory, in spite of the secrecy which was attached to the passion of the martyr. Now the antiphon is in this manner:

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[90] *Materials*, II, 30–31. The same vision is recorded in the *Saga*, II, 60, where a parallel is drawn with the vision of the mother of Thomas, in which she seemed unable to enter the Church of Canterbury. Also cf. *Saga*, II, 278.

[91] *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, II, 6.

Hali Thomas of hevenriche,
Alle postles evenliche
Dhe marthyrs dhe understande
Deyhuamliche on here hande.
Selcuth dede ure Drichtin
Dhat he dhi wette wente to wyn.
Dhu ert help in Engelande,
Ure stefne understande.
Thu hert froure imang mankynne,
Help us nu of ure senne.[92]

William then gives the Latin equivalent of the words. It is probable that the change of water into wine refers figuratively to the change in manner displayed by Becket when he became archbishop, the water referring to the worldly man, and the wine to the spiritual man.[93]

Miracles occurred in the crypt, where the body had been placed after burial. One of the anonymous writers, taking care to commit to writing, he says, only what he has definite knowledge of, tells of a nightly vision of a monk in the crypt, with a miracle involved.

> And also a certain monk of his church, passing the night in the crypt, in which the aforesaid martyr was entombed with certain other martyrs, saw one of those buried in the same place, celebrating mass; afterwards with burning incense lighting up the vicinity of the tomb of the archbishop. When he had seen this often, and had at length mentioned it publicly, five of the assembly were sent who uncovered the tomb. And they who opened it found a fragrance of a wonderful odor, and the joints of the hands flexible, as if he were still living, which afterward the whole assembly examined.[94]

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[92] *Materials*, I, 150–1. This is probably the earlier occurrence of the English antiphon found also in MS. Jesus College Oxford 29, Part II, f. 185b. It is reprinted by Richard Morris, *An Old English Miscellany*, E.E.T.S., Orig. Ser., XLIX (1892), 90. See C. Brown, *Register of Middle English Religious and Didactic Verse* (Oxford, 1916), II, 120, and J. E. Wells, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle Euglish* (New Haven, 1916), pp. 500, 847. On the date of William of Canterbury, see E. Walberg's edition of Guernes (Lund, 1922), p. xliii.

[93] If this figure were literally interpreted, and the miracle attributed to Becket rather than the Lord, it might account for a miracle dealing with Becket and the Pope. (See above, p. 88).

[94] *Materials*, IV, 199–200.

The murdered archbishop, according to the early reports, appeared in visions to many, "to whom he did not exhibit himself as dead, but living, and he did not display wounds, but only scars of wounds."[95] Fitzstephen tells of two such visions.

> Master Ralph, a canon and priest of the church of London, a man of great uprightness, a doctor eminent in divine writing, beheld in a vision that he himself, fixing his sight upon the sun, saw in the body of it a bishop clad in bishop's robes. Again, he appeared to a certain honest woman, who saw the moon fallen from heaven, and the whole thing cut to pieces by the swords of certain gladiators.[96]

Herbert relates that the martyr appeared to him in a vision and expressed the regret that he had not been present at the time of the martyrdom.

> And I said to him, "Lord, because I am a sinful man, I should certainly have perished if I had been killed." And he said, "No, because in my blood you would have been baptized."[97]

But the most interesting of such visions is that of Benedict, because it presents a parallel, as close as the actual circumstances would permit, to the Resurrection of Christ, and reveals Becket as living upon the third day after the martyrdom.

> He appeared in a vision on the night of his martyrdom: behold, our beloved, clothed in white and red, beautiful of face and comely of aspect, in pontifical robes and ornaments, went up to the altar of God, as if about to celebrate the mysteries of the Mass. When I had seen this vision on the second and even the third night, I at last began to ponder and to say to myself, "Has not my lord appeared to me before in a vision? Why do I act dissemblingly? I will go to him and I shall be addressed, or certainly I will speak and he will respond to me." And after a short salutation of praise, I said, "You will not be angry, Master, if I ask you a question?" And he said, "Speak." "Master," I said, "are you not dead?" To this question asked in Gallic he responded in Latin, "Mortuus fui, sed surrexi." Then said I, "If you are risen, and reckoned

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[95] *Materials*, VII, 432.
[96] *Materials*, II, 143–4.
[97] *Materials*, III, 503.

> among the martyrs, as we believe, why do you not manifest yourself to the world?" Said the saint to me, "I bear a light, but it cannot be seen because of an intervening fog." Since I failed to grasp the meaning of this statement, he added, "Do you wish to see?" "I do wish it, my Lord." Then the saint raised with his right hand a great lantern with a burning candle on the inside, and bade me see: and behold a fog of such great density filled the air that it seemed practically to obscure the light. Then I recalled the words he had spoken, and understood the vision, how certainly his good works do shine before men, unless this fog of his enemies intervenes. Then the saint, having put down the lantern, ascended to the altar, with those who were beginning the joyful Mass, "Laetare, Jerusalem, et conventum facite, omnes qui diligitis eam," etc. The holy father then made a sign to them that they should not go on, and he himself began a sorrowful service, without music, in a low voice, in this manner, "Exsurge, quare obdormis, Domine? exsurge, et ne repellas in finem; . . ." And then having awakened, I began to think of what he had said, "I was dead but am arisen," how he was dead from the weakness of the body, but is alive through the virtue of God.[98]

People saw in the events of the years following the martyrdom of Becket a direct connection with that catastrophe. In 1172 "the heart of the younger Henry was turned away from the love of his father, so that he began war against him, that as a sign of his great sins, which he had never expiated, the king should feel his own flesh turn against him."[99] The whole country rose in revolt: Yorkshire rebelled under Mowbray; Norfolk, under Bigod; the midland counties, under Ferrers and Huntingdon. William, king of the Scots, devastated Northumbria. The old king was practically deserted by all, "and all hands threatened evil to him, as if in vindication of the blood of St. Thomas and the church of Canterbury."[100] Henry, sensing the emergency, did the one thing that the situation required: he went to Canterbury, barefoot and clad in sackcloth, did penance at the tomb of the Martyr, where he spent the night fasting and praying. The results were immediately visible. On the same Sunday on which he made his peace with the Martyr, the Lord delivered William, king of the Scots, into his hand.[101] When he received the news, "the king filled with joy gave thanks to God and the holy martyr, saying, 'Now I know for certain that I was with St. Thomas Martyr.'"[102] Likewise on the same day the ships of the king's son, who had planned an invasion of England, were scattered by a tempest. Ample reward indeed for Henry's self-imposed flagellation!

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[98] *Materials*, II, 27–28. Cf. *Saga*, II, 44–48.

[99] *Flores Historiarum*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series), II, 84. Cf. Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* (Rolls Series), II, 285.

[100] Gervase, *Opera Historica*, II, 81–2.

The constant attempts of the medieval biographers to draw a parallel between the passion of Thomas and that of Jesus have been very apparent in the subject-matter of this chapter, and only a few illustrations need be given in summary. Jesus once cursed a tree that bore not fruit, so that it withered away; the tree under which the knights made their plot was similarly cursed. The apostle Peter defended his Lord by striking off the ear of the high priest's servant and received the Master's rebuke; Edward Grim interposed his arm when Fitz-Urse struck the first blow at Becket, and received the reproof of the archbishop. Jesus manifested complete submission to the will of His Father; Thomas was unresisting and resigned to his fate. As the Holy Ghost descended upon the head of Jesus at His baptism, so it descended upon the chalice which contained pieces of the brain of Thomas after the murder. Darkness veiled the earth at the time of the Crucifixion; at the martyrdom of Thomas, the sun hid his face, refusing to look upon such a villainous deed. When Jesus was crucified, a centurion exclaimed, "Certainly this was a righteous man," and the multitude that had assembled to witness the sight "returned smiting their breasts." After the martyrdom of Thomas, when the knights engaged in plundering the palace discovered the haircloth shirts, most of the band exclaimed, "This is a just man," and they, too, departed "beating their breasts." And finally, though it was impossible to parallel exactly the resurrection in which the Christian world believes, Thomas was made to appear in visions which revealed him in Paradise, manifesting not wounds, but only the scars of wounds, and receiving the honor that was due him; visions which depicted him even returning to earth upon the third day to make a change in the observance of the Mass, and to show that his fame would presently be seen, though for a time it was obscured by the cloud of his enemies.

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[101] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, II, 293. Cf. *Flores Historiarum*, II, 85–6.

[102] Gervase, *Opera Historica*, II, 81–2. Cf. Jordan Fantosme, Chronicle, (ed. F. Michel; London, 1840), ll, 2018–19.

## VI

## LEGENDS OF THE MURDERERS

Popular imagination soon pursued the murderers of Becket with the retribution which the enormity of their crime merited. But the traditional accounts of the fate of the murderers vary widely from the facts. Slayers of clergy could be tried only in eccelesiastical courts, and the result was that there could be no penalty for them other than excommunication. Instead of being treated as outcasts, the murderers, within the first two years of the murder, were living at court, enjoying the favor of the king, and joining him in the pleasures of the chase.[1] Morville, who had been an Itinerant Justice in Cumberland and Northumberland, lost his office in the following year, but lived until after 1199.[2] Four years after the murder Tracy is mentioned as Justiciary of Normandy, and in 1176 he is succeeded in his office by the bishop of Winchester.[3] Dean Stanley thinks that the descendants of Tracy still continue in Gloucestershire.[4] In short, the murderers remained unpunished for their deed, except for the edict of excommunication, enjoyed lives of reasonable prosperity, and in at least two cases held positions of prominence.[5]

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[1] In telling of an oath sworn by Henry at Avranches on September 27, 1172, Gervase says, "Sed quia malefactores illos qui praefatum archiepiscopum occiderunt habere non poterat, qui tamen in deliciis venationum aliquamdiu postea fuerant cum ipso commorati, et quia timebat ipsos illud prophanum opus causa motus animi quem in eo viderant perpetrasse, de satisfactione tale praestitit sacrementum." *Historical Works*, ed. William Stubbs (Rolls Series), I, 238. See also Lansdowne MS., *Materials*, IV, 160. This fact was pointed out (with the same references) by A. P. Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* (2nd American ed.), p. 124.

[2] Pipe Roll, 16 Henry II, p. 33. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 125, referring to Foss's *Judges*, I, 279, 280 and Lysons's *Cumberland*, p. 127. See also J. H. Ramsey, *The Angevin Empire* (London, 1903), p. 137.

[3] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 126, referring to Nichols's *Pilgrimage of Erasmus*, p. 221.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[5] It is interesting to notice that nearly two centuries ago a writer challenged the generally accepted traditions regarding the murderers. See Thomas Carte, *A General History of England* (London, 1747), I, 635–36. It is surprising, too, to find in a work semi-fictional in character, the following sentence, "Quant aux meurtriers, on ne songea pas à les inquietér, ils se retirèrent dans leurs fiefs où ils vécurent en paix jusqu'à la fin de leurs jours." J. M. Cournier, *Thomas Becket, Episode du XIIe Siècle* (Paris, 1857), p. 359.

If there is irony in the facts, there is poetic justice in the legends concerning the fate of the murderers. It seems to have been an almost universal belief that they all died within three or four years of the murder.[6] Giraldus Cambrensis considers their death miraculous.

> "It occurred as a great miracle that the four cruel satellites of Satan, as well as all their accomplices in the perpetrating of this deed, and all those who persecuted the martyr, were consumed by death within a short time, and the most of them by a violent death, just as if struck by Divine vengeance."[7]

Herbert of Bosham draws a vivid picture of their last days.

> Because of the enormity of their crime, which seemed ever hanging before their eyes, both during their life and at the moment of their death, their whole body trembled with horror and convulsions; as, both living and dying, they incessantly supplicated pardon of Him who is the patron of sinners, and called for protection upon him on whom they had wrought so much sacrilege.[8]

Hoveden says that all people avoided them, and no one would eat or drink with them.[9] The dogs refused to eat the scraps that fell from their tables.[10] The concluding words of an early Passion give an example of a legend in the germ, which in this case did not develop. "Some one came in, as I finished writing the above, asserting that one of the murderers of the archbishop had gone mad and killed his own son."[11] Although the legend is only in the gossip stage, if it had come into existence a few years later, it might have survived.[12]

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[6] Herbert of Bosham, *Materials*, III, 535, says they died within three years; *Flores Historiarum*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series), II, 82, says within four years; Matthew Paris, *Historia Minor*, ed. Sir Frederic Madden, (Rolls Series), I, 368, says within a few years. Three years has been the length of life usually assigned them by later writers, for example, John Mirk (*Festial*), Laurentius Wade, *The Perfect Legendary*, Heigham's translation of Villegas, Sir R. Baker's Chronicle (1639), and Alban Butler. Holinshed gives the number of years as four (*Chronicles*, II, 136), as does Thomas May, *The Reigne of King Henry the Second* (London, 1633), Book 4.

[7] *Materials*, II, 286.

[8] *Materials*, III, 536.

[9] *Chronica* (Rolls Series), II, 17.

[10] Also in Brompton (Twysden, *Scriptores Decem*, p. 1064). The source of this detail, as E. A. Abbott has pointed out (*St. Thomas of Canterbury*, London, 1898, II, 294), is undoubtedly the legend related by William of Canterbury (*Materials*, I, 120) concerning Robert de Broc (see above, p. 98). The transfer from one excommunicated person to another is natural enough, and the exaggeration of a single instance into a general occurrence may perhaps be explained by the greater guilt of the murderers.

The events which follow the murder, in the biographies, are full of the miraculous and the supernatural. Evidence of Divine displeasure was manifested immediately, according to a confession which was afterward made by De Tracy to the Bishop of Exeter.

> Although at first they [the knights] hastened to the slaying of that holy man with eagerness of mind and even with rejoicing, yet the act was no sooner done than they returned with hesitating steps, and it seemed as if the earth, with trembling and quaking, yawned before them, as though it would swallow them alive.[13]

On the same night, the murderers were said to have ridden to Saltwood Castle glorying in their exploits against the martyr. Tracy boasted that he had wounded John of Salisbury.[14] Next day they continued their journey to Malling. In connection with their stay at this place two legends are related. According to one story, the knights stopped at the gatehouse of Malling Abbey and asked the nuns for food. A meal was set before them in the refectory, but before the fugitives were seated, unseen hands scattered the food on the floor. The knights fled in terror, and the nuns were greatly puzzled by the occurrence, until the news reached them of the murder of the archbishop.[15] Giraldus Cambrensis tells an even more wonderful tale.

> On the second or third day after the horrible deed it is said that they [the knights] resorted to a manor of the archbishops which is called Malling. After supper, when they were sitting together before the fire, the great table, at which the archbishops were accustomed to dine, suddenly shook itself in such a way that it hurled to the floor all their harness, that is to say, their

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[11] Anon. V, *Materials*, IV, 200.

[12] See Abbott, *op. cit.*, I, 22 and II, 293.

[13] Herbert, *Materials*, III, 512–13. Laurentius Wade also tells of the confession, lines 2108–2121.

[14] William of Canterbury, *Materials*, I, 33. Grim, of course, was the one who was wounded.

[15] Sidney Heath, *Pilgrim Life in the Middle Ages* (London, 1911), pp. 202–3. He does not give any reference, and I have been unable to find the source. It may be oral tradition.

> saddles and pack-saddles, which had been placed upon it. The servants immediately rushed in with a light, exceedingly astonished because of such an occurrence, for the table was large and heavy and immovably fixed. But after an hour the table, in the same way, with a greater crash, which inspired terror in the listeners, threw off the things placed upon it. The servants leaped up, and taking their light as before, looked carefully to see whether there were anything concealed under the table which might be the cause. But when they found nothing, one of the knights said, "Remove these things, which the very table seems to consider an unworthy burden. By this we can judge the nature of the deed we have perpetrated."[16]

Grandison repeats the story briefly, says that the table was piled with the arms of the knights, mentions the fall of the arms only once, and says nothing about the self-condemnation of the knight. His description of the miracle is more vivid. "The table, leaping back, hurled them to a great distance from itself."[17] He adds that the table is still pointed out in memory of the event.[18]

From Malling the knights were said to have gone to Knaresborough Castle, in Yorkshire, a fortress belonging to Hugh de Morville, where they remained for a year.[19] Local tradition points out the hall to which they fled, and a vaulted prison where they were confined after their capture.[20] At the end of this time, at the command of the king or upon his advice, they fled into Scotland, but there they met such an unwelcome reception that only fear of the King of England prevented their being hanged.[21]

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[16] *Materials*, II, 285–6.

[17] "Tabula resiliens ea longius a se projecit." *Materials*, II, 285.

[18] Laurentius Wade repeats the legend, following in his account the version of Grandison. See *Thomas Beket, Epische Legende, von Laurentius Wade* (1497), ed. C. Horstmann, *Englische Studien*, II (1880), ll, 2122–2129. Abbott (*op. cit.*, II, 285–7) thinks that the legend is derived from exaggerated fact. Probably the armor of the murderers fell accidentally, and the fact that the table had belonged to the murdered archbishop encouraged the belief that something supernatural was connected with the incident.

[19] Ralph de Diceto, *Opera Historica*, I, 346; Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, II, 283, where he speaks of "Cnaresburc" as "castello regis"; Matthew Paris, *Historia Minor*, I, 368; Brompton, *loc. cit.*; Roger de Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, ed. Henry G. Hewlett (Rolls Series), I, 87. Moreville was certainly there. Pipe Roll, 17 Henry II, p. 63. Hoveden (*Chronica*, II, 17) says that the murderers "in Occidentales partes Angliae secesserunt, usque ad Cnaresburc." Needless to say, Knaresborough is not in the western part of England.

[20] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

The traditions concerning the subsequent fate of the murderers may be considered under three heads: the Pilgrimage story, the Somersetshire tradition, and the Flanders tradition. In the Pilgrimage story, the knights in penitence betake themselves to Rome.[22] William of Newburgh says that the king commanded them to go to the Pope.[23] The Lansdowne MS. says that Tracy took the lead in the pilgrimage.

> One of them named William de Tracy, filled with remorse, and in a spirit of deep penitence, forsaking everything and seeking council of no one, underwent exile, and as a public penitent, besought the mercy of the Pope.

The other three were of the same mind, but were disposed first to seek the counsel of the king. He advised them to go to the Pope, because he himself could neither punish nor defend them, inasmuch as he must purge himself from guilt; and he even gave them letters petitioning clemency.[24] The same MS. explains the perplexity of the Pope as to what disposition to make of the penitents.

> But what should he do? If he repelled them entirely, he would be said to be without pity; if he acted leniently, others would be incited to similar deeds. If he treated them harshly, either putting them off or refusing to see them, they would despair of gaining an interview, and would withdraw forever. Inasmuch as the Lord did not condemn the woman taken in adultery nor even speak harshly to her, he decided that he should neither absolve them completely nor deny their petition entirely. Therefore the Pope, seeing the penitence of the previously wicked men, received them with compassion, but examined them rigidly.

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[21] Lansdowne MS., *Materials*, IV, 162.

[22] Hoveden, *loc. cit.*, Lansdowne MS., *loc. cit.*

[23] "Sed eos Apostolicae ad suscipiendam sollemnen poenitentiam praesentari praecepit." *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. Richard Howlett (Rolls Series), I, 163.

[24] "Venientes ergo ad regem, et ipsum super hoc negotio consulentes, tale acceperunt responsum: 'Aetatem habere ut ipsi pro se loquerentur, et se ipsos ulterius tueri non posse nec defendere, quippe qui et ipse necessarium habuit se ipsum purgare.' . . . Sequidam secum detulerant supplicationes regis Angliae et aliorum quorumcunque poterant." *Materials*, IV, 162–4.

Alexander III finally pronounced their sentence.

> All the days of their life they should spend in fasting and prayer and alms; they should go to the holy places of Jerusalem, and there zealously serve in the temple with military arms for thirteen years, and fight against the pagans.

Two of the knights immediately undertook the penance; the other two delayed for a time, but afterwards acquiesced and went.

Some versions of the legend omit the trip to Rome, and have the knights go directly to the Holy Land. Herbert of Bosham says they set out for Palestine immediately after the murder.[25] Matthew Paris says that Henry ordered them to go to the Holy Land, and that they went barefoot and clad in wool.[26] Mirk's *Festial* says that they "wenten to Ierusalem; and þer þay weredyn on Goddys enmys."[27]

The murderers then, according to most accounts, went in penance to Jerusalem, either directly or by way of Rome. According to Hoveden, they died at Monte Nigro, performing penance according to the pope's instructions."[28] There is considerable variation in regard to the place of their burial. Hoveden says they were buried at Jerusalem "before the door of the Temple,"[29] and quotes the following inscription: "Hic jacent miseri, qui martyrizaverunt beatum Thomam archiepiscopum Cantuariensem." According to other accounts, they were buried in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[30] Baronius says they were buried in front of the "Church of the Black Mountain,"[31] and gives the same inscription as Hoveden. Dean Stanley shows that burial in any of these places would have been either impossible or highly improbable.[32]

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[25] "Cito tamen post patratam sacrilegium relictis omnibus Jerosolymam profecti publicam egerunt poenitentiam." *Materials*, III, 535.

[26] "Deinde tum regio praecepto, tum conscientiae stimulo, tam omnium compatriotarum detestatione compellente, sub jugo poenitentiae in laneis et nudis pedibus, in jejuniis et orationibus Terram Sanctam petierunt, et sanctorum suffragia pro expiatione peccatorum suorum flagitabant." *Historia Minor*, I, 368.

[27] *Mirk's Festial*, ed. Theodor Erbe, E. E. T. S., E. S., XCVI (1905), 44.

[28] "Et ex praecepto papae in Monte Nigro poenitentiam agentes obeirunt." *Chronica*, II, 17.

Later writers appear to have been puzzled by the term "Monte Nigro," for they give various explanations. A. B., *The Life or the Ecclesiasticall Historie of S. Thomas* (Colloniae, 1639), p. 385, says the murderers were "restrayned in a place called the Black-Mountaine, a pryson of pennance." Alban Butler says they shut themselves up in a "place called Montenigro, as in a prison of penance." *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints* (New York, 1895), IV, 809. J. F. Robert, in *Histoire de Saint Thomas Becket* (Limoges, 1844), p. 331, says, "ils s'enfermerent, suivant l'ordre du Pape, dans une espèce de prison qu'on appelait la Montagne-Noire (Monte-Nigro)."

[29] ". . . et sunt Jerosolimus sepulti ante ostium Templi." *Loc. cit.*

A correspondent in *Notes and Queries* mentions another tradition concerning the murderers.

> In the Flat Holms in the Bristol Channel are three "unknown graves" which tradition assigns to the murderers of Archbishop ÀBeckett, and I should be glad to know on what authority. The legend runs that after the bloody deed the assassins fled to a remote part of Somersetshire and there built an abbey. What abbey?[33]

The abbey was identified by correspondents as Woodspring or Worspring Priory, of which the remains are to be found about four miles north of Weston-super-Mare.[34] It was founded in 1210 by William de Courteney, a grandson of Reginald Fitz-Urse, one of the murderers of Becket, and dedicated to the honor of the Holy Trinity, St. Mary the Virgin, and St. Thomas the Martyr of Canterbury.[35] But there existed a tradition that it had been founded in expiation of the murder of Becket by a man who was descended from William de Tracy and closely related to the other assassins.[36] An explanation offered by another correspondent may help to explain the growth of the tradition.

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[30] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

[31] XIX, 399. Stanley says, "The Church of the Black Mountain may possibly be a mountain so called in Languedoc, near the Abbey of St. Papoul." *Op. cit.*, p. 122, note 3. But Baronius could hardly have referred to a place in France without saying something about the return of the murderers to Europe. Furthermore, if his statement had been so interpreted by contemporaries, it would have been seized upon by French tradition.

[32] "The front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is, and always must have been, a square of public resort to all the pilgrims of the world, where no tombs either of murderer or saint could have ever been placed. The Church of the Templars was 'the Mosque of the Rock,' and the front was the sacred platform of the sanctuary,—a less impossible place, but still very improbable. Nothing of the kind now exists on either spot." *Loc. cit.*

[33] S. R. Townshend Mayer, in *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, VII, 33.

[34] C. Ruscombe Poole, in *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, VII, 172. A. S. Ellis, in *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, VII, 268.

[35] *The Victoria History of Somerset*, ed. William Page (London, 1911), II, 144–5, referring (in the absence of a foundation charter) to the confirmation of the endowment by Edward II in 1325 (Pat. 18 Edw. II, pt. II, m. 33) and a letter written by William de Courteney to Jocelin, Bishop of Bath (Cotton MSS. quoted Dugdale, *Monasticon*, VI, 415).

> "Risdon says Sir William Tracy left a daughter, who was married to Sir Gervaise Courtney, and their son William resumed the name of Tracy. He it was, I believe, who founded the priory of Woodspring on the banks of the Bristol Channel."[37]

But whether the abbey was believed to have been founded by a descendant of De Tracy or of Fitz-Urse, the next step, to attribute the foundation to one of the murderers themselves, would be a natural development of legend. It is in this stage that it is reported by another correspondent, who has "little doubt that the tradition which ascribes the foundation of this monastery to Fitz-Urse, one of the murderers of A'Beckett, is authentic."[38] Then, as the people felt that the murderers in their misery would cling together, and as there was already a tradition to the effect that they fled to the west of England,[39] the three graves in the Flat Holms could easily be associated in the popular mind with three of the murderers. Perhaps the tradition that De Tracy himself went on a pilgrimage and died at Cosenza[40] accounts for the omission of a grave for him.

Flanders preserves still another legend concerning the fate of the murderers. Immediately after the perpetration of the crime, the knights lost all sense of taste and smell. They were ordered by the pope to wander through the world until they had recovered their lost senses. At Cologne their sense of taste returned to them. When wine was poured out for them at the inn, they perceived the savor of it and cried out, "O blessed Cologne!" In Mechlin, as a woman passed by, carrying a basket of newly-baked bread, they caught the odor and cried out, "O holy Mechlin!" The brothers (as they are styled in this tradition) built huts for themselves under the walls of the Church of St. Romold, and died and were buried there. Over their grave appeared the following epitaph: "Rychardus Brito, necnon Morialus Hugo; Guilhelmus Traci, Reginaldus filius Ursi: Thomam martyrium subire fecere primatem."[41]

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[36] See A. S. Ellis, *loc. cit.*

[37] John Piggot in *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, VII, 172.

[38] C. Ruscombe Poole, *loc. cit.*

[39] Hoveden, *Chronica*, II, 17. See above, p. 141, n. 19.

[40] See next page.

The murderers are buried, then, according to tradition, in three widely separated places: Jerusalem, Somersetshire, and Flanders; and to these may be added "The Church of the Black Mountain," of uncertain location. In Jerusalem, as we have seen, two burial places have been assigned: the gate of the Temple and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Five sites may lay traditional claim to the grave of the murderers.

De Tracy has been the subject of numerous legends because of the tradition that he had struck the first blow at the archbishop.[42] The legends may be considered under three heads: The Pilgrimage Story, Devonshire Traditions, and Gloucestershire Traditions. Of the Pilgrimage Story, the most vivid account is given by Herbert of Bosham:

> One of the murderers, however, following the advice of evil men, delayed his departure for Jerusalem from day to day after the others were gone, hoping to accomplish his penance without crossing the sea. When he was in the dominions of the king of Sicily, at the large city called Cosenza, he was seized with his last illness: before his death his limbs began to decay, so that he himself could easily tear off the flesh, and throw it into the middle of the room, thus exposing the bones and nerves. Especially the flesh of his arms and hands, scarcely hanging to the bones, semed to desire separation from that murderous knight (penitent, however, I hope), and loosening itself, fell off as if voluntarily. Indeed, it seemed as though it were indignant, and ashamed to be part of the composition of the hands of a man who had committed such evil deeds. While thus tearing his flesh and hurling it from him, that wretch did not cease, with sighs and groans, to implore pardon and protection of the glorious new martyr. This was William de Tracy, the knight on whom the God of vengeance thus justly avenged the blood of the saint which cried out to him. For it was he, profane and impious man, who dared

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[41] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 123, referring to *Acta S. Rumoldi Sollerius*, Antwerp, 1718.

[42] The evidence seems to indicate that Fitz-Urse, andnot DeTracy, was the striker of the first blow. See above, p. 120–21.

> to spur on the others, who first among the knights brandished his sword, and feared not to strike the head of the servant of Christ. Therefore it was a just retribution of the Omnipotent, that contrary to the law of nature, while he was yet living, his limbs should rot, and the hand and arm decay which had wielded the sword. This account we have from the bishop of the aforesaid city, the confessor of this William in his illness.[43]

According to another version Tracy was supernaturally prevented from accomplishing his vow, for the winds of heaven always drove him back.[44] Thus arose the saying,

"The Tracy's
Have always the wind in their faces."[45]

According to the *South English Legendary*, he never left England.[46]

The Pilgrimage Story is not without a slight basis of fact. Tracy, it seems, did go as a penitent to the Papal Court.[47] He seems also to have attempted a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and to have stayed for a time at the monastery of St. Euphemia, in Calabria. There, presumably in ill health and in fear of dying without the rights of the church, he made a grant of his Devonshire Manor of Doccomb in the parish of Moreton Hampstead, to Christ Church, Canterbury, for the support of a monk to celebrate masses for the souls of the living and the dead.[48] Tracy did not die in Calabria, however, for as we have already seen, he reappeared in England. The resort to the supernatural to account for his not reaching Palestine, the description of his horrible disease, and the account of his death, are all legendary accretions.

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[43] *Materials*, III, 536–538.

[44] Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, ed. P. Austin Nuttall (London, 1840), I, 558.

[45] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 123; J. L. W. Page, *The Coasts of Devon* (London, 1895), p. 114. Lady Rosalind Northcote, in *Devon* (London, 1919), p. 221, quotes Fuller as saying, "If this was so, it was a Favour in a hot Summer to the Females of that Family, and would spare them the use of a Fan." (The remark is not in the edition of Fuller that I used.) The statement of the curse in Ward, Lock and Co.'s *Guide to Ilfracombe* (11th ed.) p. 20, sounds like a later variation:

"Oh, woe to the Tracies
With ever the rain and the wind in their faces."

[46] "He hopede her in Engelond repentaunt inouȝ to beo." Ed. H. Thiemke, *Palaestra*, 131, line 2432.

[47] See the letter of Herbert addressed to the two cardinals Albert and Theodore, *Materials*, VII, 511.

According to the traditions of Devonshire, Tracy retired thither immediately after the murder. Three places in the county are associated in legend with his fate: Ilfracombe, Woolacombe, and Mortehoe. A cave called Crookhorn, or Crewkerne, near Ilfracombe, is pointed out as the place of his first concealment. The cave is filled with water except for three months of the year, but at some time during that period, Tracy hid himself for a fortnight, according to the Ilfracombe boatmen, and was fed by his daughter.[49]

At the northwest corner of Devonshire, projecting into the ocean, stands Morte Point, "The Rock of Death," taking its name from the many shipwrecks which have occurred there.[50] A manor near by was formerly the property of the family of Tracy. De Tracy is said to have retired to this place after the murder. An old farmhouse, close to the seashore, still called Woolacombe Tracy, is said to mark the spot where he lived in banishment.[51] A short distance to the west lies the village of Mortehoe, and to the south, along the edge of Morte Bay, extends the Woolacombe Sands, which are supposed to be haunted by his ghost. The curse fell upon him that ever after his death he was compelled to wander at night; according to some, over Woolacombe Sands; according to others, among Braunton Burrows (about two miles to the south), until he could make a rope of sand. But his penance is never ended, for whenever the rope is nearly woven, there comes a black dog with a ball of fire in his mouth, and breaks it. People who live in cottages along the shore sometimes hear shrieks and wails.

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[48] Stanley, *op. cit.*, pp. 130–1. Dean Stanley also mentions another document, in which a certain William Thaun, before his departure to the Holy Land with his master, calls upon his wife to render up to the Blessed Thomas and the monks of Canterbury all the lands given him by his lord, William de Tracy.

[49] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 127. P. H. Gosse, *Seaside Pleasures*, pp. 56–58, quoted in *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, VI, 218.

[50] "Sir William de Tracy," *Western Antiquary*, IX (Nov., 1889), p. 83.

[51] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

> Sometimes the uneasy spirit haunts the northern landing place of the ferry from Braunton Burrows to Appledore, and a wild, long-drawn cry of "Boat ahoy!" comes ringing in the darkness over the waters. No one answers that call now after dusk, for once, many years ago, the ferryman, who is well remembered among the Appledore people, went over, and no man was there, but the black dog jumped into the boat. The ferryman, not much liking this, put back again as fast as he could, but when Appledore was nearly reached the dog swamped the boat, made his way to shore, and was lost in the shadows of Northam Burrows. And the boatman's nerve was so much shaken that soon afterwards he gave up the ferry.[52]

A local history gives an account of the legend concerning De Tracy's return to Mortehoe, adorned no doubt with touches from the writer's own imagination.[53] According to this narrative, King Henry, in a stirring scene in Glastonbury Abbey, banishes Tracy to Mortehoe. Tracy returns to his own castle and tells his fate to his wife, who selfishly refuses to share his exile. Sir William goes first to Ilfracombe and then to Mortehoe, where he is followed by his daughter Adeline, a beautiful damsel of the court of Henry II, who was with her cousin in Essex at the time the sentence was pronounced. She brings her harp with her to make the days less wearisome.

> Tradition now reports that not unfrequently during the stillness of evening are tones of an exquisite voice accompanying the melody of a harp heard to issue from the spot where dwelt the exile and his daughter.[54]

Sir William dies about ten years later and is buried in the parish church. The sword which he carried and the armor which he wore at the time of the murder of the archbishop are deposited at his side. Adeline erects a monument and causes an inscription to be placed there.

In the village of Mortehoe there is a parish church dedicated to St. Mary Magdelene and containing a tomb which tradition has assigned to De Tracy. The upper slab of this tomb, composed of black or dark grey marble, bears the figure of a priest in full canonicals, and around the edge of the lid the following inscription: "Syr Wiliame de Tracey git ici, Deu del alme eyt mercy."[55] On the north side of the tomb there is a shield bearing the Tracy arms, and the figures of Sts. Margaret and Catherine, to whom the chantry containing the tomb is dedicated. Investigation has shown that the tomb is a memorial of Sir William Tracy, an ecclesiastic and rector of Morte, who died in 1322 and was buried in the south transept, of which he is believed to have been the founder.[56] But tradition asserts that it is the tomb of the murderer of Becket, who (according to one version) founded the church in expiation of his crime, and (according to another) built the South Transept. The figure of the priest is explained by supposing that Tracy returned from exile and became a priest.[57] The figures of the saints Margaret and Catherine are, curiously enough, said to represent the wife and daughter of Tracy, who are supposed to be buried in the tomb with him. The attempt to reconcile the facts concerning the ecclesiastic with the tradition concerning the murderer, and also the fact that the upper slab seems to be of greater antiquity than the rest of the tomb, have led to some interesting conclusions. Some people have thought that the tomb contained the body of both the murderer and the priest.[58] A correspondent in

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[52] Lady Rosalind Northcote, *op. cit.*, pp. 221–2.

[53] Sydney Harper, *History of Barnstaple for Boys and Girls* (Barnstaple and Bideford, n. d.), pp. 60–63. Tracy's retirement to Morte occurred twenty-three years after the murder, according to an interpolation in one edition of Camden's *Britannia*. See the translation by Edmund Gibson (4th ed., London, 1722), I, 167.

[54] Sydney Harper, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

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[55] At least, such would be the reconstructed inscription. Many of the letters have become defaced. The following reading of the actual inscription, made by G. B. Longstaff, 24 September, 1902, is taken from an unpublished record kindly lent me by Rev. T. F. Daffen, the present rector of Mortehoe Parish:

SYRE (3 or 4 letters gone) LAME DE TRACE (about 12 letters gone) ALME EYT MERCY

[56] Lieut. Col. Harding, "On the Effigies of High Tombs in the County of Devon," *Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Society*, VI, 187–92. A description posted in the church gives the following information: "We have a contemporary record of the foundation of the Chantry of St. Mary Magdelen and St. Catherine in 1307 by Sir William Tracy, whose tomb now occupies the middle of it. He died in 1322, having been rector for many years, and a generous benefactor to the church: our fourth bell, traditionally reported to be the oldest bell in Devon, was cast about this time, and may quite possibly have been his gift."

[57] J. L. W. Page, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–15.

[58] *Ibid.*

*Notes and Queries* thinks it is probable "that the slab of the tomb belongs to Sir William Tracy's Tomb of the twelfth century, and the sides to that of William Tracy, rector of Mortehoe."[59] Mr. Page thinks that

> though the odds are against the monument being the tomb of an assassin, there is a possibility that the slab (in some other part of the church) covered his bones, and that the words referred to him and not to the priest, whose figure was added later.[60]

But neither respect for the priest nor fear of the ghost of the murderer prevented people from violating the tomb, for Risden[61] speaks of persons who had taken the lead in which the dead was wrapped, and says that they never prospered afterward.[62]

Two other churches in Devon are traditionally said to have been founded by Tracy: Nymet Tracy, near Yeoford Junction, and Bovey Tracy Church, which was dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket.[63] A chapel which once stood by Barnstaple Bridge was similarly dedicated, and "obtained some celebrity from being said to have been built by Sir William Tracy, one of the prelate's assassins, in expiation of his crime."[64] The Church of Newton Tracey, whether or not it was believed to be connected with the murderer, was at least dedicated to Becket.

Dean Stanley points out that local histories of Gloucestershire represent De Tracy as engaged in the wars of John and of Henry III, as late as 1216 and 1222, thus making him live to the age of ninety.[65] Stanley remarks that he has probably been confused with a son or grandson.

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[59] John Piggott, in *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, VII, 172.

[60] *Loc. cit.*, Cf. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 128, note 1.

[61] Tristram Risdon, *The Chorographical Description, or, Survey of the County of Devon* (London, 1714), p. 117.

[62] A modern poem is based upon the legend of De Tracy's return to Devonshire, and his interment in the Church of Mortehoe. It concludes:

"And the pitying neighbors laid him
In the stately church he had built
On the heights above the ocean,
To purge away his guilt.

A brief and a humble legend
Was carved on a brazen scroll,
'Here lies Sir William Tracy,
God's mercy on his soul.'"

"Sir William Tracy," *Western Antiquary*, IX (November, 1889), p. 83.

[63] Ward, Lock, & Co.'s *Guide to Ilfracombe, loc. cit.*

[64] J. B. Gribble, *Memorials of Barnstaple* (Barnstaple, 1830), p. 45.

Although the other murderers naturally did not fill so large a place in legend as did De Tracy, there are traditions associated with Fitz-Urse and Moreville. Tradition has it that Fitz-Urse went to Ireland and became the ancestor of the M'Mahon family, M'Mahon being the Celtic translation of "Bear's Son." Sir Henry Spelman writes in 1632:

> Touching their issue, I find that Fitz-Urs fled into Ireland, and I heard there that the Wild Irish, and Rebellious Family of Mac-Mahunde, in the North Parts, is of that Lineage.[66]

William of Canterbury tells a horrible story to illustrate the cruelty of Hugh de Moreville.

> It is said that his wife was ardently in love with a youth named Lithulf, who rejected her advances. With consummate craftiness, the woman requested him to ride toward her on horseback, as if in sport, with his sword drawn. When he did so, she exclaimed in a loud voice to her husband, "Huge de Morevile, ware, ware, ware, Lithulf heth his swerd adrage." Wherefore the innocent youth, as one who had lifted his hand to shed the blood of his master, was sentenced to death, and achieved martyrdom by being thrown into boiling water.[67]

There is a tradition to the effect that Morville, after the murder, fled into Scotland and founded the monastery of Kilwinning, Ayrshire. An account is given in Timothy Pont's "Cuninghame Topographized":

> It [the monastery of Kilwinning] was foundit by a noble Englishman, named Sir Richard Morwell, fugitive from his oune Country for ye slaughter of Thomas Beckett, Arch. of Canterbury [being one of them], in the Rainge

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[65] *Op. cit.*, p. 127, citing Rudder's *Gloucestshire*, p. 776.

[66] *The History and Fate of Sacrilege* (London, 1698), p. 133. Cf. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 125; Thomas Fuller, *op. cit.*, p.

[67] *Materials*, I, 128–9. The legend is also in the *Quadrilogus*, *Materials*, IV, 384–5.

> of King Henry II. of England, quho, flying to Scotland, wes be the then Scotts King velcumed, and honoured with ye office of Grate Constable of Scotland, as also inriched with ye Lordschips of Cuninghame, Largis and Lauderidaill. . . . Now the fores[ai]d Richard being, as vald seime, tuoched with compunctione for ye safty of hes soule (according to the custome of these tymes), did found this abbey of Kilvinnin in testimony of hes repentance.[68]

One may observe that the reception of Morville by the people of Scotland, in this legend, is quite different from that accorded the murderers in the Lansdowne MS.[69] Pont further says that R. Morwil, the founder of the abbey, lies buried in the cemetery of the church, without any superscription or epitaph. Two circumstances are against the tradition: the monastery is generally believed to have been founded not by Sir Richard, but by his father Sir Hugh, thirty years before the murder of Becket,[70] and the name of the murderer was not Richard, but Hugh. The basis of the legend seems to be merely a confusion of names.

Thus the traditions which deal with the fate of the murderers individually represent them as having been scattered in various countries, and buried in widely separated places: De Tracy in Devonshire or southern Italy (Calabria), Fitz-Urse in Ireland, and Morville in Scotland. Richard Breton alone seems to have been ignored by legend.

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[68] Quoted from a Balfour MS. in the Advocates' Library, in *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, VII, pp. 395–6. The correspondent says the MS. was written about 1600, and he thinks that it was founded in part on the register of the monastery.

[69] See above, pp. 141–42.

[70] *Notes and Queries, loc. cit.*

## VII

## LEGENDS OF ST. THOMAS

A large quantity of legendary material may be found in the miracles and visions associated with Becket as St. Thomas. It is not necessary, for the present purpose, to attempt to distinguish between the element of fact and that of legend in a large number of individual miracles. Such an undertaking would be beyond the scope of the present chapter, and moreover has already been ably done by E. A. Abbott, in his *St. Thomas of Canterbury: His Death and Miracles.*[1] Perhaps it is just as well not to be unduly exercised over the question of authenticity when dealing with such an uncertain subject as medieval miracles. All the accounts are permeated with the imagination and credulity of the time, and it is more profitable to consider them as products of the period and the personality of the man to whom they owe their origin. That legend *is* present in most of the miracles will become apparent as they are studied. The present task, then, is to take a sweeping view of the miracles and visions of St. Thomas, dwelling upon those which are so extreme in character as to make the presence of legend in the accounts incontestable, to classify these miracles and visions in so far as possible, and to note their significance in the development of the legend of Becket.[2]

In a sense the miracles attributed to Becket are largely a result of the popular conception of the saint, a conception in which the growth of legend has already been traced.[3] All students of the life of Becket know that he was popularly recognized as a saint long before his canonization; in fact, the title was first applied to him within a few hours of the martyrdom. When the body had been placed upon a bier in front of the high altar, where it was surrounded by weeping monks, Robert of Merton, the aged confessor and companion of the archbishop, and one of the three who had been present at the martyrdom, spoke of Becket's austerities to the bystanders, and called attention to the fact that Becket had worn sackcloth. Then, says Fitzstephen,

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[1] London, 1898.

[2] Cf. Robertson's brief but excellent treatment of Becket's miracles, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket* (Rolls Series), II, xviii–xxxvi, to which, as well as to the work of Abbott, the present chapter is to some extent indebted.

[3] See above, Chap. I.

> He thrust his hand into the bosom, showing next to the skin his haircloth shirt, and above it, the habit of a monk. For when he was elected archbishop, he became abbot of the monks of the church of Canterbury, and he wore concealed the mantle of the canons of Christ and the Benedictine monks. Then the monks, transported with spiritual joy, raised their faces and their hands to heaven, praising God; they converted their weeping into spiritual rejoicing, their lamentation to exclamations of joy; realizing his double martyrdom, voluntary in life and violent in death, they fell to the ground and kissed his hands and feet; they called him St. Thomas; they declared him a holy martyr of God. All ran to see him in sackcloth whom they had known as a chancellor in purple and fine linen.[4]

On the following morning, acting upon a rumor that the De Brocs had threatened to drag the body from the church, the monks prepared to bury it.[5] When the clothing was removed, it was discovered that the drawers as well as the shirt were of haircloth.[6] At the sight of such an unparalleled act of self-mortification, the grief of the monks was redoubled.[7] Grim says that the haircloth was "swarming with vermin," and that it was "so infested with worms that anyone would judge the martyrdom of the previous day lighter in comparison."[8] Then he adds,

> When they had seen this, the monks deeply impressed by such unexpected

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[4] *Materials*, III, 147–8.

[5] Fitzstephen, *Materials*, III, 148–9.

[6] *Ibid*. Cf. Benedict, *Materials*, II, 17; Anon. X, *Materials*, IV, 438–9; *Saga* I, 558.

[7] Benedict, *loc. cit.*

[8] *Materials*, II, 442. Cf. Anon. II., *Materials*, IV, 134–5, and Anon. *Materials*, IV, 199. The other authors do not mention the worms, though as Abbott remarks (I, 232, note 2), Anon. I may include them in "omnia sanctitatis et religionis insignia." *Materials*, IV, 78–9.

> piety burst forth in these words, "See, see, how true a monk he was, and we knew it not!"[9]

Herbert, though he does not mention the vermin, emphasizes even more than the other writers the effect upon the monks of the discovery of the haircloth.

> And because many among them, just as the men of the world, had doubted the sanctity of the man, now, when they beheld this, they were filled with a terrible amazement and a wholesome contrition, and their faith was immovably strengthened. And as if transported from earth by a vision . . . they exclaimed with the centurion of the gospel, "Truly this was a son of God!"[10]

Almost immediately after the martyrdom miracles began. There is no agreement among the writers as to which was the first cure effected. Fitzstephen relates, as the first of the signs wrought by God for the martyr, that immediately after the burial, a citizen of Canterbury returned to his paralytic wife with a garment which he had dipped in the saint's blood. When the blood was washed off, diluted, and drunk by the afflicted wife, she was at once cured. This circumstance, says Fitzstephen, is probably the origin of the custom of diluting the Martyr's blood with water to be used as a remedy for diseases.[11] Grim and Benedict treat as the first miracle the healing from blindness of the wife of a knight in Sussex, on the third day after the murder. When the news of the murder came to her, she vowed to visit the resting-place of the saint if he restored her sight.

> Immediately, as though the martyr had spoken to her in the words of the Lord, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt," in about half an hour, her prayer having been answered, she received her sight.[12]

In commenting upon this miracle Benedict uses words which parallel John 2:11.

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[9] Cf. Guernes (ed. Walberg), ll. 5799–5800.

[10] *Materials*, III, 521–2.

[11] *Materials*, III, 146. See Abbott, I, 234. As some readers may prefer consulting the translation or abstracts of miracles in Abbott to the Latin original, references will also be given to that book, wherever it treats the miracle or vision in question.

[12] *Materials*, II, 38 (Abbott, I, 227). Cf. Grim, *Materials*, II, 439 (Abbott, I, 231).

> This beginning of signs did Jesus in Sussex of England, and manifested the glory of his martyr before the faces of us his disciples who ate and drank with him before . . . he was slain.

Anon. V. tells of a blind man belonging to the household of the archbishop, who recovered his sight by anointing his eyes with the blood while it was still fresh.[13] As William's miracles are related with no consideration for chronology, his book makes no contribution to the question of the first miracle.

The miracles soon began to multiply. Gervase thus traces their growth:

> In the beginning the Holy Martyr, as if setting forth a prelude, began to shine by means of moderate miracles. After that, attaining gradually to greater and greater wonders, he ran through in a short time all the miracles of the gospels. For at first at his tomb, then throughout the whole church, and afterward throughout all England, the ill of any infirmity whatever recovered by calling upon his name. And also to some he restored new members, and others, already buried, he restored to life.[14]

Abbott points out that the miracles did not at first receive publicity, and that it was even unsafe, for a time, to speak of them outside of the chapter-house.[15] At first it was mainly the poor folk of Canterbury who were healed, but the cures and the reverence for the saint gradually spread to higher circles of society, until even the king was converted to the worship of St. Thomas. Finally his power was demonstrated by miracles outside of England: in Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy, the Low Countries, Denmark, Norway, and in a few instances, Germany.[16] After enthusiastic letters had been written to the Pope, after the miracles had grown to such an extent that they could no longer be ignored, and after a commission had been sent to investigate the miracles,[17] Alexander III finally gave authority for the canonization of Thomas, on February 21, 1173.[18]

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[13] *Materials*, IV, 199. Abbott rejects this miracle because of the general untrustworthiness of this author, and because it is mentioned by no other of the witnesses to the scenes in the cathedral after the martyrdom. (*St. Thomas of Canterbury*, I, 240). Also see above, p. 123. The miracle is mentioned in one of the MSS. of a letter from William of Sens to Pope Alexander (*Materials*, VII, 431, note 13).

[14] *Opera Historica* (ed. Wm. Stubbs; Rolls Series), I, 230.

[15] *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, I, 223–4.

[16] *Materials*, II, xxxii–xxxiii.

The two great sources for the miracles of Becket are the Latin works of Benedict and William of Canterbury.[19] Benedict, who was first appointed to record the miracles, is generally more conservative and more trustworthy in his accounts than William. Some of the other biographers relate a few of the early miracles, though the tendency is only to make generalizations. The *Saga* includes about seventeen from Benedict, and about thirty-five which apparently owe their origin to the lost work of Robert of Cricklade.[20] A relation of miracles occurring at the monastery of Dommartin (or Dampmartin), near Hesdin, in Artois, where the power of the saint was manifested in a manner second only to wonders performed at Canterbury, was attributed to "Guillaume II de Bomy, abbé de Dommartin vers la fin du XIIe siècle."[21] No manuscript or copy of the original exists, but it is believed to have been the basis for an Old French translation.[22] A number of these miracles are also reported by Thomas Stapleton (who, according to Corblet, has utilized the Old French translation in his *Très Thomae*,[23] and reprinted by Dr. Giles in his *Anecdota Bedae.*[24] A much fuller list is given by Charles Du Canda in his life of St. Thomas.[25]

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[17] Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* (2nd American ed.), p. 119, citing Baronius, XIX, 396.

[18] *The Chronicle of Florence of Worcester*, trans. Thomas Forester (London, 1854), p. 301. Cf. the inaccurate account in the *Saga*, II, 184–94.

[19] Vols. II and I, respectively, of the *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket.* Alban Butler refers to "an English MS. translation of a Latin history of these miracles, compiled by a monk who lived in the monastery of Christchurch at the time of the saint's martyrdom," and "a MS. relation in English of two hundred and sixty-three miracles wrought by the intercession of St. Thomas of Canterbury," *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and other Principal Saints* (Dublin, 1833, II, 1102, note). These works are probably a translation of Benedict, both because of the number of miracles mentioned and because of references to miracles and to definite statements not included in William.

[20] *Saga*, II, clv–clvii.

[21] L'abbé J. Corblet, *Hagiographie du Diocèse d'Amiens* (Paris et Amiens, 1874), IV, 631.

[22] An analysis of this translation has been published, according to Corblet, by M. Van Drival, in *Le Tresor sacré de la cathédrale d'Arras*, from which M. Corblet reproduces the analysis of several of the miracles. *Op. cit.*, pp. 631–8.

[23] Dvaci, 1588.

There is nothing remarkable in the existence of miracles associated with the name of St. Thomas; it would have been much more remarkable, indeed, if there had been none. What is remarkable is the number and variety of these miracles. With 276 recorded by Benedict, 402 by William, 27 in the *Saga*, 64 by Du Canda, even after allowing for duplications, we have record of at least five hundred miracles of St. Thomas, certainly many more than are recorded in the entire Bible. Their variety will be apparent after classification and further study.

Any attempt to classify the miracles of St. Thomas is likely, because of the nature of the material, to prove rather unsatisfactory. The following outline is intended merely to furnish a working basis for the consideration which follows, and the divisions are not always mutually exclusive.[26]

I. Miracles of Justice
    1. Punishment
    2. Reward
    3. Poetic justice
II. Imitative Miracles (Based upon Biblical models)
    1. Healing of the blind.
        (Cf. Matthew 9: 27–31; 20: 30–34, etc.)
    2. Healing of the deaf.
        (Cf. Mark 7:32–35; Matthew 11:5)
    3. Healing of the dumb.
        (Cf. Matthew 9: 32–33)
    4. Healing from lameness.
        (Cf. Matthew 21:14; Acts 8:7, etc.)
    5. Healing from paralysis.
        (Cf. Matthew 12: 9–13)
    6. Healing of lepers.
        (Cf. Matthew 8: 2–3; Luke 17: 12–14)

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[24] Caxton Society, Vol. XII (London, 1851), pp. 137–167.

[25] *La Vie de S. Thomas Archevesque de Cantorbie* (S. Omer, 1615), pp. 227–272.

[26] The classification presented here is indebted to a statement made by W. H. Hutton that all medieval miracles fall into one of two classes: miracles of vengeance and miracles of compassion. The second group he divides into (1) the directly imitative, (2) dreams, (3) coincidences, (4) natural causes. *The English Saints* (London, 1903), pp. 291–5.

7. Healing from dropsy.
   (Cf. Luke 14: 2–4)
8. Healing from madness (possession by demons).
   (Cf. Matthew 4: 24)
9. Healing of epileptics.
   (Cf. Matthew 4: 24)
10. Healing from fever.
    (Cf. Luke 4: 38–39; John 4: 46–54)
11. Raising of the dead.
    (Cf. Luke 8: 41–56; John 11: 1–44)
12. Restoration of lost members.
    (Cf. Luke 22: 50–51)
13. Releases from prison.
    (Cf. Acts 12: 5–11)
14. Stilling of tempests.
    (Cf. Matthew 8: 23–27; 14: 24–32)
15. Deliverance from perils at sea (Acts 27: 9–44)
16. Saving from death of various kinds.
    (Cf. Daniel 3: 19–30; 6: 16–23; Acts 28: 3–6)
17. Offspring given contrary to nature.
    (Cf. Genesis 18: 9–15; 21: 1–7)
18. Parallels to the "Miracle of the Widow's Meal and Oil"
    (1 Kings 17: 8–16)
19. Conditional miracles. (2 Kings 5)

III. Coincidences.
   1. Miracles of losing and finding.
   2. Other coincidences.

IV. Natural Causes.

V. Whimsical Miracles.
   1. Animal miracles.
   2. Miracles with candles.
   3. Other curious miracles.

Miracles of punishment or rebuke are very common among the miracles of Becket. The majority of them deal with offenses against the Martyr. For denying the power of St. Thomas in performing miracles, and for saying that the King of Kings would no more exalt "this traitor than he would this dog," Oliver of Nantes was bereft of reason and his eyes fell from their sockets.[27] Afterward, by the grace of St. Thomas, he was healed, though his memory was never fully restored to him. Thomas of Etton, a knight of the county of York, was smitten with quinsy for blasphemy against the saint, and for speaking of him as a "profligate spendthrift."[28] Realizing the divine rebuke, he repented, and was speedily cured. The son of Ingelram, a knight of Golton, was struck with paralysis and lost the use of one of his arms, partly because of the sin of his mother, who scoffed at the Martyr and urged one of her guests to accept an invitation to visit Hugh of Mor ville, one of Becket's murderers, and partly because of his own sin in declaring that, since he was not suffering from any infirmity, he had no need of the pilgrimage.[29]

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[27] *Materials*, I, 151–3.

Deriding the pilgrimage, or attempting to dissuade people from undertaking it, often called forth punishment. For speaking disparagingly of the Martyr to one whose pilgrimage had been in vain, Eliza, the wife of Martin of Leicester, was punished with blindness, which after ten weeks was only partially healed.[30] Because he discouraged his shipmates from visiting Canterbury, on the ground that evil might befall the ship, Ralph the Black was punished with madness, but as soon as he had made a vow to St. Thomas, he was restored.[31]

Failure to perform a vow made to St. Thomas was usually attended with punishment. A knight who had vowed to walk barefoot in a procession in honor of St. Thomas, decided on the morning when his comrades set out, that he was too tired and sleepy to accompany them. But after he had returned to his bed, he was suddenly pierced through the foot with a knife. He removed the knife as best he could, and followed his companions to the chapel, where he was healed.[32] The son of a married priest was restored by the vow of pilgrimage which his mother had made, but the ungrateful parents, perhaps ashamed to confront the monks at Canterbury, failed to perform the pilgrimage. Their punishment was severe: they lost two sons, and a daughter fell into the fire and was seriously burned.[33]

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[28] *Materials*, I, 153; II, 92 (Abbott, I, 271; II, 76–80).

[29] *Materials*, I, 195–8; II, 219–20 (Abbott, II, 118–28). Benedict does not speak of the mother's sin, but makes the boy entirely responsible for the misfortune which befalls him.

[30] *Materials*, II, 206.

[31] *Materials*, I, 303 (Abbott, II, 28).

[32] *Materials*, I, 519 (Abbott, II, 60–61).

Delays in the accomplishment of a pilgrimage usually resulted in punishment. For delaying beyond the time they had set for a pilgrimage, a certain Jordan and his wife were punished by the loss of a son.[34] Thomas of Beverly, for postponing his pilgrimage for four days, experienced a swelling in the neck and jaw; but when he had begun his pilgrimage, and had crossed the Humber, he immediately began to feel better.[35] Likewise, Paul of Rouen, who had obtained a fair passage from Winchelsea to Sandwich by invoking St. Thomas, for postponing his pilgrimage was driven back by wind and storm, while people in two companion ships proceeded to port.[36] One dared not allow relatives to interfere with the performance of a vow. Roger of Valognes (in Normandy) was detained by his father when he had vowed a pilgrimage, and on the day when those who had made a similar vow began their journey, he wounded himself in the foot. He was cured, however, upon his arrival at Canterbury.[37]

A refusal to make an offering to St. Thomas brought an appropriate punishment. A farmer named Elias had six fine bullocks, and a neighbor, pointing out one of the best of them, remarked that it should be offered to St. Thomas. Elias, who had recently made an offering to the Martyr, saw no reason for repeating it so soon. But he gained nothing by refusing to sacrifice the bullock, for when next he saw it, it was dead and the body decaying.[38] A knight's wife, who refused to give a drink of beer to some pilgrims who asked in the name of St. Thomas, was punished by the loss of the beer, which immediately began to flow away.[39] Robert of Angoville (in Normandy), for threshing on St. Thomas's Day, was punished by having the flail stick to his hands.[40] Because a lame boy, who had come to

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[33] *Materials*, I, 526. (Abbott, II, 66.) See also the case of a woman of Stockton. *Materials*, I, 467–8.

[34] *Materials*, II, 232.

[35] *Materials*, I, 182. (Abbott, II, 11).

[36] *Materials*, I, 183–4 (Abbott, II, 12).

[37] *Materials*, I, 538–9 (Abbott, II, 73). For other examples of the results of delaying a pilgrimage, see *Materials*, I, 162 and II, 38.

[38] *Materials*, I, 535–6. (Abbott, II, 70–71.)

[39] *Materials*, I, 500.

[40] *Materials*, I, 496 (Abbott, II, 58).

Canterbury, fell asleep with his head against the tomb, he was told by the saint in a vision not to expect a cure.[41] He was not healed. For mere neglect to record a miracle performed by St. Thomas, a monk was punished by the loss of a relic.[42]

Personal sins, such as vanity, falsehood, and theft, were often rebuked as well as those involving a direct offense against the Martyr. A woman in England desired to have grey eyes, in the belief that she should be more beautiful, and for that purpose made a pilgrimage to St. Thomas upon her bare feet.[43] But instead of receiving an answer to her prayers, she became entirely blind. Realizing that she had offended the Lord, she repented and through the merits of St. Thomas, received again her old eyes. A woman named Galiena was punished with tumors for her vanity in sewing to her shoes ornaments of gold and of various colors.[44] She likewise was healed after she had repented and called upon St. Thomas. Eremburga of London, who had been healed at the tomb of the Martyr, for making a false oath to her husband about the possession of some money, was punished by a relapse and the loss of her wits.[45] When she became quiet and confessed her guilt, she was taken back to the tomb and gradually recovered. An Irish pilgrim, for stealing a phial for the "water of St. Thomas," was afflicted with a tumor of the neck, but was healed after he had made confession.[46] A female servant who had stolen some money was miraculously punished by insanity, but was restored through the intercession of the Martyr.[47]

The selfishness of the son of William of Banwell, who refused to stay with his father at Canterbury until a cure was effected, resulted disastrously to both men.[48] As the son was leading his father from the city, he too was struck with blindness, and though passersby gave them nearly enough money to enable them to reach Canterbury again, the writer, Benedict, was not aware whether they had ever been healed. Pretending to be blind, that he might obtain some of the Canterbury Water, resulted in actual blindness for Geoffrey, a knight of Gloucestershire, but because of his penitence he afterward regained his sight.[49] A rustic of Abingdon forced his wife and brother to leave Canterbury before the latter was entirely cured. Then at an inn of Rochester he spoke contemptuously of "St. Thomas' blind folk" and declared he would not lodge at the same place with them.[50] As a punishment he became blind himself, and no number of visits to the shrine of the Martyr availed to restore to him his sight. For the slight offense of sewing on a hook and eye that had come off her little sister's cloak, on the Wednesday in Whitsuntide, the fingers of Emma of Halberton were contracted and remained so until, in the village church, the relics of St. Thomas were applied to the hand.[51]

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[41] *Materials*, II, 67 (Abbott, I, 264).

[42] *Materials*, II, 268 (Abbott, I, 332).

[43] *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Graesse (2nd ed., Lipsiae, 1840), p. 69; William Caxton, *The Golden Legend* (Temple Classics, London, 1900), IV, 59; St. Antoninus of Florence, *Opus Chronicum* (Lugduni, 1586), II, 707; Vincent Ferrier, *Oeuvres* (Paris, 1909), II, 243.

[44] *Materials*, I, 469 (Abbott, II, 53).

[45] *Materials*, II, 90 (Abbott, I, 270).

[46] *Materials*, I, 308–9.

[47] *Materials*, I, 321–3.

[48] *Materials*, II, 207 (Abbott, I, 313–4).

But in some instances St. Thomas failed to punish people who were certainly deserving of punishment. Alfred of Gloucester, a fisherman, received three visions in which he was bidden to command the king to visit the tomb of St. Thomas, and though Alfred went out twice to meet the king, each time he was filled with fear and failed to deliver the message.[52] His remissness, however, met with no punishment. In one case, St. Thomas even failed to take notice of blasphemy. Gerard of Flanders, who had been healed as a result of a pilgrimage, suffered a renewal of his disease while he was returning home from Canterbury.[53] In his pain he exclaimed, "Thomas, worthless one, crazy old man, no martyr but a gallows-bird, why do you make my labor of no avail? My pilgrimage is useless." The martyr, to the astonishment of those who overheard the blasphemy, not only overlooked the man's sins—perhaps because, as William suggests, "he blasphemed in word but not in heart,"—but also restored him to health.

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[49] *Materials*, II, 205 (Abbott, I, 313).
[50] *Materials*, II, 206 (Abbott, I, 313).
[51] *Materials*, I, 193–5 (Abbott, II, 15).
[52] *Materials*, I, 275 (Abbott, II, 24–5).
[53] *Materials*, I, 471 (Abbott, II, 54).

Miracles of reward are not so common as those of punishment, but there are several of them. In reward for kindness to a pilgrim, the wife and daughter of Herbert of Felton were cured.[54] Odo of Falaise, who had lost the sight of his right eye, happened to weep for the death of the Martyr.[55] When he dried his tears, he found that he had regained his sight. Curbaran, a shoemaker of Dover, prayed daily for the soul of the martyr, ignorant, as Benedict says, that he who prays for a martyr wrongs the martyr.[56] St. Thomas appeared to him in a dream, promised to reward him, and bade him look in a certain spot under a mill. The shoemaker, on following the instructions, found a rusty denarius, which proved to be a valuable gold coin of Diocletian.

Several miracles seem good examples of poetic justice. In anger because she had scolded him, the son of a certain widow gave his mother a kick that caused her to fall swooning to the earth.[57] Some time afterward the boy, who had forgotten about the incident, came on a pilgrimage to Canterbury. But when he reached the door of the temple, an invisible hand pushed him back, so that he could not enter. He confessed his sin to a priest, who suggested that in penance he should cut off the member which had so grievously offended. Without a word the young man took an axe, cut off his leg, and then proceeded to the temple, which he was now permitted to enter. Furthermore, after he had tied the severed portion to the stump of his leg, it was healed as if he had not been maimed at all.[58] A pilgrim returning from foreign parts, was robbed of a bezant which he had intended to offer at the shrine of St. Thomas.[59] But the pirate who had robbed him could not escape with his booty, for he found himself rooted to the spot until he cast away the purse containing the bezant. Sometimes St. Thomas saw that the right prevailed in a judicial combat, as in the case of a horse dealer who had been falsely charged with the theft of a colt.[60]

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[54] *Materials*, I, 271–2.
[55] *Materials*, II, 186 (Abbott, I, 308–9).
[56] *Materials*, II, 156 (Abbott, I, 295).
[57] *Saga*, II, 126–30.
[58] Cf. the account of Mathilda, wife of Ertin, who was unable to reach the tomb because of offense done to the saint. *Materials*, II, 81.
[59] *Materials*, I, 466 (Abbott, II, 53).

Theft was often miraculously detected. As an Essex farmer named Richard was dining with some friends, his shepherd entered bearing a pyx of the Canterbury Water.[61] The farmer proposed that they agree to let the pyx serve as a test: if it were found to contain the water, then the shepherd had served him faithfully; if not, the servant was a thief. The shepherd agreed, and when the pyx was opened, not a drop of water was found.[62] A maidservant who had stolen a moneybox from William of Monkton while he was at Piacenza was recaptured at Pavia by William's host, who had been led on miraculously by an invisible guide.[63]

A large group of miracles parallel those related of Jesus in the New Testament or elsewhere recorded in the Bible. When John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus inquiring, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered,

> Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.[64]

Benedict speaks of the miracles of St. Thomas in a passage which seems like a duplication or an elaboration of the Biblical quotation:

> By his merit the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the mute speak, the poor have the gospel preached to them, paralytics are healed, those afflicted with dropsy recover, the mad are restored to reason, epileptics are cured, those having a fever are raised up,

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[60] *Materials*, I, 295–6.

[61] *Materials*, II, 96 (Abbott, I, 272–3).

[62] This is probably the same story related in the *Legenda Aurea* (ed. Graesse), p. 69, and by William Caxton, *The Golden Legend* (Temple Classics), IV, 59, though it is not told so fully in either place, the shepherd is spoken of as a carver, and there is no mention of the Canterbury Water, the carver apparently bringing ordinary water to his master as he sat at table.

[63] *Materials*, I, 321 (Abbott, II, 30).

[64] Matthew 11: 4, 5.

> and to conclude briefly, all manner of infirmity is cured: and almost all the gospel miracles have been reproduced in many ways by his merit.[65]

John of Salisbury, too, in a passage which sounds like a summary of the miracles of Jesus, says:

> For in the place of his passion, and in the place in front of the great altar where he lay before burial, and in the place where he was finally buried, paralytics are cured, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk, lepers are cured, those having a fever are healed, those possessed with demons are freed, the ill are healed from various diseases, blasphemers possessed with a demon are confounded, and (a thing unheard of since the days of our fathers), the dead are raised.[66]

Healings from blindness are very common among the miracles of St. Thomas. The first miracle recorded by Benedict belongs to this group.[67] On the fourth of January following the martyrdom a poor woman of Canterbury received her sight by touching her eyes with a rag stained with the blood of the Martyr, which she had requested from a neighbor.[68] Some of the cures of blindness involve people blind from birth.[69] One of the most significant of the cures from blindness holds especial interest because it was reported by Gilbert Foliot, a namesake and kinsman of Becket's old enemy.[70] Sometimes the cure was effected upon a person who had been blinded by the public executioner in punishment for a crime, as in the case of Ailward of Westoning.[71] In spite of the cruelty of the executioner, who in a fit of temper because he had difficulty in cutting the eyes out, drew a knife and pierced them again and again, Ailward admitted, on the third day afterward, that a slight vestige of sight remained in one eye. Application of the "Water of St. Thomas" produced an immediate and complete cure. St. Thomas even healed a man from semi-blindness who during Becket's life had called him a traitor, but perhaps there was an incentive to generosity on the part of the former archbishop from the fact that he himself had called his accuser a scoundrel and a bastard.[72]

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[65] *Materials*, II, 26.

[66] *Materials*, II, 322 (Abbott, I, 227). Benedict and William, however, do not mention any instances of the dead being raised *at the tomb*.

[67] Above, p. 4.

[68] *Materials*, II, 41 (Abbott, I, 253).

[69] For examples, see the case of the boy from Chalgrave, *Materials*, II, 116 (Abbott, I, 278), and that of the three-year-old child cured at Newington, *Materials*, II, 116 (Abbott, I, 297).

[70] *Materials*, II, 149–50 (Abbott, I, 290).

[71] *Materials*, I, 155–8; II, 250–1 (Abbott, I, 326; II, 80–102). Cf. I, 423 (Abbott, II, 103–4); II, 250–1 (Abbott, II, 104–6).

There seem to be only seven cures of deafness related by William and Benedict. The former mentions a woman who was cured of deafness and pain in the head by drinking the Martyr's blood and having it poured into her ears.[73] The various stages of the cure, which are described in detail, were rather severe on the patient, but they resulted in restored hearing.

One of the earliest miracles, occurring on Easter Sunday, 1171, deals with a supposedly dumb man named Samson. There are several doubtful features about the miracle: it seems that the man was not perfectly cured, and there also seems to be no evidence that he had ever been entirely dumb.[74] Of several miracles dealing with dumbness, one of the most remarkable concerns the healing of a Welsh boy, who had been dumb from birth.[75] Although he left Canterbury dumb, he began to speak by the time he reached Rochester, both in English and Welsh.

Several instances of healing from lameness occur in the miracles of St. Thomas. Eldrid of Canterbury, who had been lame for three years and could not walk without a crutch, arose after a short prayer in the cathedral, and cast away the staff she had used.[76] Eilwin of Berkhampstead, who had used crutches for sixteen years, was immediately cured.[77] Richard, son of Einold, had suffered for thirty-four years from a contortion of the legs and feet, which prevented him from walking normally.[78] He came to Canterbury, prostrated himself before the altar of the Virgin, behind which the body of the Archbishop had been placed because of a rumor that enemies were plotting to steal it, suddenly leaped upon the altar and dashed down again, and afterward was perfectly healed.

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[72] *Materials*, I, 440 (Abbott, II, 50–51).

[73] II, 66 (Abbott, I, 263–4). For other cures from deafness, see Index to Volume II of the *Materials*.

[74] *Materials*, II, 57 (Abbott, I, 258–9).

[75] *Materials*, II, 147 (Abbott, I, 288–9).

[76] *Materials*, II, 61–2 (Abbott, I, 261).

[77] *Materials*, II, 124–5 (Abbott, I, 283).

[78] *Materials*, II, 77 (Abbott, I, 268–9).

William recites a large number of instances in which paralytics were cured. In one of them, a young Genoese recovered the use of his limbs as a result of a vision of St. Thomas, and in gratitude afterward visited the tomb of the martyr.[79] In one of the miracles recorded by Benedict, an old knight named William was brought on horseback to the Cathedral in such a condition that he had to be supported on each side to prevent his falling, but after he had prayed at the tomb, he was able to throw away his crutch and return without help.[80] The cure of the paralytic Aylmer was a very gradual one, as he was brought to the Saint on several successive days, and only by degrees acquired the use of his limbs.[81]

There are numerous instances of healing of lepers. One of the earliest miracles, which tells how Elias, a monk of Reading was cured of leprosy, is interesting because of the variations between the narratives of William and Benedict.[82] He was so greatly afflicted that he "might have been called a second Lazarus."[83] Benedict says that under the pretense of going to Bath, he obtained leave of absence and started to Canterbury; William says that he spent forty days to no advantage at Bath, and then set out for London, ostensibly to seek medical aid there. According to Benedict, Elias met a knight for whom he cherished a strong friendship, and who, after warning him not to proceed to Canterbury lest he cast reproach upon his convent, gave the leper some of the Water of St. Thomas. According to William, Elias obtained the Water from some pilgrims. Benedict adds that he also got possession of a strip of clothing of the Martyr. Abbott's conclusion that the monk was not a completely veracious person, and that he told two stories, is inescapable. The case of Simon, a mason of Derby, is interesting because the patient was in the employ of Roger, Archbishop of York.[84] William explains the delay of St. Thomas in healing Simon on the ground that Roger should have an opportunity to see what he could do. But when Roger had done nothing, the saint took compassion on the leper and healed him. No saint, says Benedict, either in the old dispensation or the new, has equalled St. Thomas in the number of his cures of leprosy.[85]

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[79] *Materials*, I, 455.

[80] *Materials*, II, 73 (Abbott, I, 266).

[81] *Materials*, II, 123 (Abbott, I, 283).

[82] *Materials*, I, 416; II, 242–3 (Abbott, II, 170–9).

[83] William, quoting the letter of a monk of Reading.

Of the instances of madness, or "possession by demons," that of Matilda of Cologne is one of the most remarkable. So furious was she that she would have strangled a little child who got in her path, if it had not quickly been snatched from her by people standing by.[86] Gradually she was healed, and by morning she had recovered perfect sanity. In the case of a Frenchman, William feels that the martyr St. Denis deliberately transferred the miracle to St. Thomas, who was not yet generally known.[87] The influence exerted by the demons over language seems to have been very remarkable. Mad Gerard of Liege, at the time of his possession, was able to speak nothing but Latin, but after his cure, he was able to talk in French.[88] A certain woman was possessed for eight years by a very linguistic demon, which caused her to speak "in Latin, German, and various ways."[89]

Other diseases cured by St. Thomas include fevers, dropsy, and epilepsy. Miracles of healing from fever are quite as numerous as they are in the New Testament. Conspicuous among such healings is that of the bishop of Exeter, who was raised up after six days of suffering from semitertian fever and pleurisy,[90] and that of Josse of Pont Audemer, who, at the point of death with a fever, was visited by the saint in a vision and healed.[91] Among accounts of cures of dropsy is that of a woman named Levive, who after three days waiting at the tomb, returned home blaming the Saint because of her lack of cure.[92] But St. Thomas mercifully appeared to her in a vision, and gave her directions for the preparation of a medicine, which proved effective. Only a few instances of the cure of epileptics are recorded. After reciting the different kinds of epilepsy, William relates the cure of a nun of Polesworth.[93] An epileptic Canon of Oseney, also, who had been attacked by the disease at gradually diminishing intervals for twenty years, was restored when he came to Canterbury.

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[84] *Materials*, I, 334–6 (Abbott, II, 31).
[85] *Materials*, II, 185.
[86] *Materials*, II, 208 (Abbott, I, 314).
[87] *Materials*, I, 304 (Abbott, II, 28).
[88] *Materials*, I, 410 (Abbott, II, 46–7).
[89] *Materials*, I, 519 (Abbott, II, 60).
[90] *Materials*, I, 407–8.
[91] *Materials*, I, 375.
[92] *Materials*, I, 158 (Abbott, II, 8–9).

Members of the body, lost either through disease or mutilation, were often restored by St. Thomas. A boy in the house of Roger de Burnebi lost a finger as a result of disease of the bone, and received another, but slightly smaller one, in its place.[94] Eilward of Westonning, as a punishment for theft, was deprived of his eyes and otherwise mutilated, and the members were buried in the ground.[95] By the mercy of St. Thomas the members were restored, but it was noted that whereas originally both his eyes had been parti-colored, one was now black.[96] In the case of John of Valenciennes, whose eyes were miraculously restored to him, further investigation revealed that the eyes, instead of being removed, had only been pierced with a sharp knife, a circumstance which, as Abbot remarks, throws light on the earlier miracle.[97] There are also cases like that of Thomas, a deacon, who was mutilated by a jealous husband and afterward healed by St. Thomas.[98]

Many of the restorations to life are instances of drowning, a fact which suggests, of course, considerable doubt whether the person involved was dead at all.[99] In two instances, however, the situation is considerably complicated by the person's meeting death under a millwheel. The case of the child of a woman of Lichfield is such an example, but the woman was unable to provide witnesses to prove the truth of her assertions, and she did not succeed in convincing the brethren of Canterbury.[100] A miller name Walter, from the diocese of Worcester, "constantly asserted" that his son had had a similar experience, but here again, there seem to have been no other witnesses.[101] Details are lacking in the account, and we have only the phrase "ad vitam rediisse" to indicate that the child was really dead. Frequently the narrator is frankly doubtful about the miracle.[102] Her friends were doubtful whether Lucy, the wife of a knight of Mont-paon, were dead.[103] The Martyr settled the question, says William, by calling her back to life. But the modern reader is left to wonder just what question was settled! Sometimes William becomes very cynical, as in the following recital:

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[93] *Materials*, I, 162–3.

[94] *Materials*, I, 423–4 (Abbott, II, 49).

[95] *Materials*, I, 155–8; II, 173–82 (Abbott, II, 80–102).

[96] Cf. the case of "Roger, a simpleton," *Materials*, I, 419–23 (Abbott, II, 48–49; 103–4).

[97] *Materials*, II, 250–1.

[98] *Materials*, I, 424–8 (Abbott, II, 49). Cf. *Materials*, I, 520 (Abbott, II, 61).

[99] See, for examples, *Materials*, I, 202, 207; *Materials*, I, 200–2 (Abbott, II, 162–70); *Materials*, I, 522 (Abbott, II, 62); *Materials*, II, 226 (Abbott, I, 319–20); *Materials*, II, 227, *Saga*, II, 162 (Abbott, I, 320).

> A certain man told me that his wife had hanged herself. He showed me the halter which she had used. But as he had kept it hidden from his neighbors and associates, lest they be shamed by the Martyr's visitation, I do not wish to reveal her disgrace. What she did, I declare in general terms.[104] What acts she did, saving modesty, I leave hidden. Why she did it, I believe to be diabolical suggestion. Where she did it—to avoid saying nothing—it was in the world. When she did it, I heard but do not remember. From the halter she was delivered by her husband; from death by the martyr; by the latter through a vow, by the former, with a knife.[105]

Many of the miracles of revivification are of children;[106] several involve infants.[107] Some of the miracles might possibly be explained on the ground of emotional shock, as that of Cecily, daughter of Jordan of Plumstead, who was supposed to have died of cancer.[108] A queer miracle concerns Geoffrey, a carter, who was struck by lightning, burned from the waist upwards, and considered dead, but who was restored in a condition of madness, of which he was soon healed.[109] One of the most extreme miracles of revivification tells of a page of King Henry who was kicked to death by a horse. The detail is given that the man's "inwards rolled out forthwith."[110] But upon the petition of the king the page was restored to life. In some of the most remarkable cases recorded, a considerable time had elapsed between the supposed death and the revivification: a child in Touraine who had broken its neck in a fall from a tower was restored on the seventh day;[111] two sons of a certain widow were restored to life after lying in their graves for several years![112] In one instance, a man was restored to life in order that he might receive the viaticum and thus die in peace![113]

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[100] *Materials*, I, 346 (Abbott, II, 33).

[101] *Materials*, I, 348.

[102] For examples, see *Materials*, I, 366–7 (Abbott, II, 36); *Materials*, I, 523 (Abbott, II, 63); *Materials*, I, 525 (Abbott, II, 65).

[103] *Materials*, I, 523–4 (Abbott, II, 63–4).

[104] "Quod fecit, in genere propono."

[105] *Materials*, I, 524. Cf. Abbott's translation, II, 65.

[106] See, for examples, *Materials*, I, 200–2; II, 238–9 (Abbott, II, 162–70); *Materials*, I, 160–2; II, 229–34 (Abbott, II, 128–45); *Materials*, I, 484 (Abbott, II, 55).

[107] See, for examples, *Materials*, I, 230 (Abbott, II, 18); *Materials*, I, 345; *Materials*, I, 483 (Abbott, II, 55); *Materials*, I, 484 (Abbott, II, 55); *Materials*, I, 526 (Abbott, II, 66); *Materials*, I, 541 (Abbott, 74–5).

[108] *Materials*, I, 190–3; II, 234–7 (Abbott, II, 146–61).

Among the imitative miracles may also be placed releases from prison, stillings of tempests, deliverances from other dangers at sea, and savings from death of various kinds. The release of Guy,[114] imprisoned in Stafford on a charge of manslaughter, recalls the deliverance of Peter from the prison of Herod.[115] Some one brought Guy some of the Canterbury Water, and when he drank, the prison door flew open. Twice the miracle was repeated, and the guards, not realizing the source of the phenomenon, led out Guy and chained him to a beam. A vision bade him call on Thomas, and when he did so, the chain fell off. When he was brought before the king, the latter, upon the mention of St. Thomas, dismissed the prisoner. William explains that St. Thomas might have delivered the prisoner unseen by everyone, but for the effect which such a miracle would have had upon the king.

Tempests were frequently stilled as a result of the appearance of St. Thomas. On a seventh of July, as some pilgrims were journeying to Canterbury, a severe tempest arose on the sea, and Satan appeared as a dragon surrounded with fiery flames.[116] The people, at the point of despair, called upon St. Thomas, who obligingly appeared at the side of the ship as a bishop, and blessed all the pilgrims. Satan fled, and the sky began to clear immediately; not a passenger was lost, and all came to Canterbury. When Richard I was on an expedition to the Holy Land in 1190, a severe storm arose, and while the sailors were frantically praying to the Lord, St. Thomas appeared to three different persons on board the ship containing the Londoners, assured them of his own presence, and that of St. Edmund and St. Nicholas, and bade them be of good cheer.[117] As soon as he had disappeared, the tempest ceased. There are many other instances of deliverance from perils at sea. Once, in the midst of a storm, he showed to some sailors a brilliant light at the mast-head of the vessel.[118] He often saved people from shipwreck,[119] delivered them after shipwreck,[120] or preserved them in storms.[121]

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[109] *Materials*, I, 404 (Abbott, II, 43–4).
[110] *Saga*, II, 168–70.
[111] *Materials*, I, 144 (Abbott, II, 51).
[112] *Saga*, II, 164.
[113] *Materials*, I, 439–40 (Abbott, II, 49–50).
[114] *Materials*, I, 276–7 (Abbott, II, 25–6).
[115] Acts 12: 5–11.

Rescues from drowning, in fact, whether at sea or on land, are among the most common of the miracles of St. Thomas. In one story, a man who had fallen overboard was found by his former shipmates "sitting on the waves and upborne by the billows, as though he had been preserved in order to carry out the vow he had made to the martyr."[122] Salerna of Ifield, accused by her mother of stealing cheese, and threatened with being whipped to death unless she confessed her guilt, threw herself in a deep well, calling upon St. Thomas as she did so. The saint heard her prayer, and supported her in the well, placing her feet upon some kind of staff until help came and she was drawn from the well.[123] During the great flood of Holland in 1173, a man fled from his cottage leaving his two children and a cow entrusted to the care of the Martyr.[124] When he returned after the flood had subsided, he found everything safe. According to the story of the children, a man in white had visited them, and brought bread for themselves and hay for the cow.

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[116] *The Chronicle of John Stone*, in *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. W. G. Searle, Publications of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Octavo Series, XXXIV (1902), 100.

[117] Benedict of Peterborough, *Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I* (ed. William Stubbs, Rolls Series), II, 116; Thomas de Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa* (ed. E. A. Bond, Rolls Series), I, 252–3; Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* (ed. H. R. Luard, Rolls Series), II, 365; Roger de Hoveden, *Chronica* (ed. William Stubbs, Rolls Series), III, 42–43.

[118] *Materials*, I, 474–5.

[119] *Materials*, I, 323–4; II, 112–3.

[120] *Materials*, I, 316.

[121] *Materials*, I, 324, 325; II, 215.

[122] *Materials*, I, 528 (Abbott, II, 66).

Two instances of prolongation of life after hanging are given by William. In one, Girard, a weaver of La Tour Blanche, was convicted of theft and cast into a cellar, which was covered by a stone so large as scarcely to be moved by three men.[125] The prisoner called upon St. Thomas and immediately the stone was rolled away. But he was recaptured and later tried and hanged after he had made a confession of guilt. On the gallows he was borne up by a heavenly hand until at sunset his wife came to take down the body and bury it. She found her husband still alive; the whole town, learning of the miracle, assembled, and the judges begged forgiveness of the man they had condemned. In a similar miracle, two men were hanged and one was saved, in spite of the fact that he had a log attached to his feet![126]

In many other extreme situations St. Thomas lent his aid. As David, by the power of the Lord, was able to overcome the mighty Goliath,[127] so a weaker contestant in a judicial combat, by calling upon St. Thomas, was able to triumph over his opponent.[128] The saint even delivered in ordeal a number of men who were *justly* accused of theft, because they invoked him.[129] Men were delivered after being buried by a fall of earth,[130] or of chalk;[131] a child was preserved after a wall of a house had fallen upon it;[132] another was saved from destruction by a mill;[133] and a boy, who was run over by a carriage as he was returning from a pilgrimage, was unharmed.[134]

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[123] *Materials*, I, 258–61; II, 263–6 (Abbott, II, 237–59). William's story is less miraculous than that of Benedict; the Divine Hand, he says, "planted a wooden beam across the well, and having set the shipwrecked creature upon it, placed a staff in her hand, with which to sustain herself against the side of the well," a version which goes far to explain the miracle.

[124] *Materials*, I, 539–40 (Abbott, II, 73).

[125] *Materials*, I, 370 (Abbott, II, 37–39); *Saga*, II, 110–12.

[126] *Materials*, I, 515 (Abbott, II, 39, note 7).

[127] Samuel 17: 4–50.

[128] *Materials*, II, 247 (Abbott, I, 324–5).

[129] *Materials*, II, 247 (Abbott, I, 324–5).

[130] *Materials*, I, 253–6; II, 261–3 (Abbott, II, 220–37).

[131] *Materials*, I, 453.

A miracle from Arnold Fitz-Thedmar's *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* recalls that of Abraham and Sarah.[135] The grandfather of the author of the chronicle, also named Arnold, or Arnulf, lived for years with his wife, Ode, without children. Hearing of the miracles performed by St. Thomas, they came to Canterbury with the petition that they might be granted a child. Some time afterward, in London, the wife found that her prayer had been granted, and the pair remained in that city until after the birth of the child.[136] The Old Testament miracle of the Widow's Meal and Oil,[137] which were multiplied as necessity required, is likewise paralleled in the miracles of St. Thomas. Richard, chaplain to the Sheriff of Devon, vowed to give alms on his pilgrimage to everyone who asked in the name of St. Thomas, but owing to an oversight of the servants, he was embarrassed for lack of change.[138] But money was miraculously provided: every time he met a beggar and thrust his hand into his pocket, he found an obol ready for his use. A somewhat similar circumstance happened to Ralph, sub-prior of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, who found that the three obols he had given to the poor had not only been returned but duplicated![139]

Sometimes, in the miracles of St. Thomas, the healing is dependent upon the patient's obedience (or that of someone else) to a specific command, as in many of the Biblical miracles, for example, the healing of Naaman the leper.[140] Richard of Reading was told in a vision to sprinkle his side with a phial that he would find in the chapel, that he might be cured of fits.[141]

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[132] *Materials*, I, 206–7; II, 252–3 (Abbott, II, 190–8).

[133] *Materials*, I, 499–500.

[134] *Materials*, I, 343.

[135] Camden Society. The story of the miracle is retold in Sir Walter Besant, *Mediaeval London* (London, 1906), II, 67.

[136] Cf. the miracle of the wife of a knight of Fulletby, *Materials*, I, 264–5.

[137] 1 Kings 17: 8–16.

[138] *Materials*, II, 210 (Abbott, I, 315).

[139] *Materials*, II, 211 (Abbott, I, 316). Cf. the story of Sibilla, whose denarius was returned to her, *Materials*, II, 209 (Abbott, I, 315).

[140] 2 Kings 5.

[141] *Materials*, I, 417–9 (Abbott, II, 48).

Philip, the son and heir of Louis VII of France, who had befriended the Saint in his lifetime, became very seriously ill.[142] St. Thomas appeared to the father in his sleep, and told him that if he would visit his tomb in perfect faith, his son would be healed. Louis obeyed, contrary to the advice of his counsellors, and upon his return, found his son recovered. A letter included in William's sixth book of miracles tells of a waking vision which came to a young man named William, a nephew of Archbishop Theobald, at a time when the clergy of the Cathedral of Exeter were suffering from an epidemic of influenza.[143] The Bishop and all the clergy would recover, the youth was told, if they would cut their "roasted eggs" into quarters and inscribe them with the Martyr's name. The instructions were followed with the desired results. Finally, to name no more examples, St. Thomas promised to some pilgrims bound for Jerusalem deliverance from dangers if they would pray for Fitz-Urse, an incident which is especially interesting because, as Abbott remarks, it lends support to the theory that Fitz-Urse, rather than De Tracy, was the chief murderer.[144]

Among the miracles which can fairly be considered matters of coincidence, those involving the finding of lost articles claim chief place. When William tells about the return of a horse which had been lost and attributes its recovery to a prayer made to St. Thomas, he recognizes that many will think it due to chance, and tries to prove that nothing happens by chance.[145] Lost money was found through the agency of St. Thomas;[146] in one case a man recovered an obol as a result of speaking the name of St. Thomas in a jest.[147] Relics were frequently lost and found:[148] a ring containing relics of St. Thomas was found with six silver pieces that had been intended as an offering for the shrine;[149] a lost bone of the head of St. Thomas was discovered on an altar.[150] A priest returning from Canterbury found a spur that he had lost 26 miles away;[151] a woman recovered a stolen web;[152] a cheese was miraculously revealed;[153] and lost anchors were recovered.[154] Some of the other miracles seem no less matters of accident. One wonders, for example, what connection St. Thomas had with the falling of a certain golden vessel, a signal sufficient to give the alarm, when a thief was collecting articles in the Cathedral of Canterbury.[155] The barn of Hugh of Rutheby was supposed to have been preserved from fire because he had prayed to St. Thomas;[156] when there was a general conflagration in Waterford, in Ireland, the houses of those who had built a chapel to St. Thomas were spared.[157] A woman's escape from being struck by a falling ash was explained on the ground that she had prayed at the altar of the Martyr.[158] Medieval faith attributed even such natural phenomena as fair weather to the favor of some saint. It was only after an altar had been consecrated to St. Thomas that Prince Henry was able to sail, after being weatherbound for fifteen days.[159] Finally, as we have seen, the penance of King Henry was supposed to have brought immediate and beneficial results.[160]

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[142] Benedict of Peterborough, *Chronicle*, I, 240–1.
[143] *Materials*, I, 407–9 (Abbott, II, 45–6).
[144] *Materials*, I, 363 (Abbott, II, 36).
[145] *Materials*, I, 282–3 (Abbott, II, 27).
[146] *Materials*, I, 319, 320.
[147] *Materials*, I, 286 (Abbott, II, 28).
[148] *Materials*, II, 268–9.
[149] *Materials*, I, 284 (Abbott, II, 27).
[150] *Materials*, II, 268–9 (Abbott, I, 332).

Doubtless many of the miracles already considered may have been due to natural causes. Many of the so-called cases of revivification are merely instances of resuscitation after drowning. In other cases of apparent death a strong emotional shock is sufficient to effect a restoration. In some of the accounts of revivification there is such marked doubt in regard to the death that the miracle loses its value. For example, in the case of a knight's stepson who was supposed to have been choked by him, but who recovered, one immediately infers that the son was not choked to death.[161] In cases of judicial blindness, there were sometimes vestiges of sight remaining, a fact which helps to explain the miracle of restored sight.[162] The power of suggestion and the faith in St. Thomas go far to explain many of the cures. Abbott asks whether it may not be supposed that since vomiting sometimes followed the drinking of the Water of Canterbury, the monks may not have blended the water with some medicinal drug.[163] As the same writer says, a pilgrimage to Canterbury was in itself likely to produce beneficial results.[164] Exercise, fresh air, change of scene, conversation with other people, and the excitement of a journey—all these accompaniments of a pilgrimage may have contributed to the cures that were effected.

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[151] *Materials*, I, 285 (Abbott, II, 27).
[152] *Materials*, I, 469.
[153] *Materials*, II, 153.
[154] *Materials*, I, 3001; II, 215 (Abbott, II, 113–118).
[155] *Saga*, II, 138–40.
[156] *Materials*, I, 476.
[157] *Materials*, I, 477.
[158] *Materials*, I, 450.
[159] *Materials*, I, 250 (Abbott, II, 23).
[160] Above, pp. 135–36.
[161] *Materials*, IV, 429.

The medieval imagination did not content itself with surrounding the affairs of human life with the supernatural, but imagined St. Thomas intervening in the lives of animals. The popular saint performed miracles upon birds, horses, cows, oxen, dogs, sheep, geese, and pigs! One of the most remarkable of these miracles tells of a tame bird (a starling, in some versions) which had been taught to repeat the name of St. Thomas.[165] One day, when it was outside its cage, it was pursued by a sparrow hawk (kite, in some versions), but when it called out, "St. Thomas, help!" its pursuer fell down dead. A curious restoration of sight was effected in the case of a man and a falcon.[166] Each had lost an eye, the man because he had remarked contemptuously that St. Thomas cared not whether the falcon had two eyes or one. At Canterbury both the man and the falcon received an eye, but the falcon's eye was given to the man, and the man's eye to the falcon. Hawks were recovered after they had been lost,[167] cured of a broken leg,[168] saved after being run through the eye by the bill of a crane,[169] and restored when supposed to be dead.[170] In one instance, instead of restoring a dove that had been lost, St. Thomas sent the owner another.[171]

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[162] Above, pp. 167–68.

[163] I, 262–3.

[164] II, 14.

[165] *Materials*, I, 529 (Abbott, II, 67); *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Graesse (Lipsiae, 1840), p. 69; Jean Batallier, *La Legende Dorée*, f. xxviii; Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum* (Coloniae, 1851), II, 255–6; Vincent Ferrer, *Sermones . . . De Sanctis* (1539), f. xxvii; St. Antoninus of Florence, *Chronicon* (Lugduni, 1586), II, 707; Mirk's *Festial*, ed. T. Erbe, E. E. T. S., E. S., XCVI (London, 1905), p. 43; William Caxton, *The Golden Legend*, ed. F. S. Ellis (Temple Classics, London, 1900), IV, 59.

[166] *Saga*, II, 140–6.

The horse of Anselm, a monk of Reading, which had fallen partly through a hole in a bridge, was extricated on the invocation of St. Thomas.[172] The cure of a horse which had been wounded in the eye was on one occasion effected by imitating the eye in wax, and signing it with the cross in the name of the Martyr.[173] A cow was saved from the murrain by the prayer of its owner.[174] Cows were frequently restored to life.[175] One such miracle is particularly interesting because it involved the only cow of a poor man, who had skinned it and buried it amid tearful petitions to St. Thomas.[176] That night the cow returned and went at once to her stall. When the poor man went to look for the carcass and skin of the animal, he found both of them missing! A clerk's concubine revived an ox that was apparently dead.[177] Benedict asserts that on one occasion when he was attacked by dogs he silenced them by bidding them in the name of St. Thomas, to hold their peace.[178]

A lamb was restored to life, and there were no traces of scars, although it had been killed by a knife plunged into its throat.[179] A mother bade her children cast out a gander that had died, but they failed to do so, and one of them said, "We will dedicate it to St. Thomas."[180] Shortly afterward the gander revived. Similarly, a mother in Norwich commanded that a dead pig should be thrown out of doors. Her daughter said, "No, it shall be set aside for St. Thomas."[181] She took a pair of scissors and snipped the ears of the pig, whereupon it stood up. A much more remarkable miracle tells of a pig that was preserved by St. Thomas for forty days in the river Wharfe, in reward for the honesty of its owner.[182]

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[167] *Materials*, I, 388, 390, 466–7 (Abbott, II, 53), 502; II, 157 (Abbott, I, 292).

[168] *Materials*, I, 388 (Abbott, II, 40).

[169] *Materials*, I, 528 (Abbott, II, 66–7).

[170] *Materials*, I, 389.

[171] *Materials*, I, 392.

[172] *Materials*, I, 415 (Abbott, II, 47).

[173] *Materials*, II, 144 (Abbott, I, 287).

[174] *Materials*, I, 393.

[175] *Materials*, I, 156, 537 (Abbott, II, 72).

[176] *Materials*, I, 536 (Abbott, II, 71–2).

[177] *Materials*, I, 391 (Abbott, II, 40).

[178] *Materials*, II, 224 (Abbott, I, 319); Sulp. Severus, Dial. III, c. 3. Migne, *Patrologiae Latinae*, XX.

[179] *Materials*, I, 343 (Abbott, II, 32).

[180] *Materials*, I, 359 (Abbott, II, 34).

A number of miracles of Thomas have to do with the relighting or multiplication of candles.[183] John of Poitiers writes to the monks at Canterbury that when he was returning from the shrine with relics of St. Thomas, he witnessed the relighting of two candles, and a priest of York testified that he had found a candle relighted on the altar.[184] A candle given to the daughter of Aylward of Canterbury for an offering was alone extinguished, among a number of candles, by the wind, but was almost immediately relighted.[185] Goditha, daughter of Baldwin of Wye, was in despair because she had extinguished the light of her candles and no one had a light to give her, but her prayer to the Martyr was answered, and her candles were relighted.[186] A variation of such miracles is one in which the candles of people who were holding a vigil on the site of a proposed chapel to St. Thomas, remained lighted in the wind as a result of prayer to the martyr.[187] A woman named Cecilia, after making seven candles for herself, her husband, and each of her sick animals, regretted that there was not one more.[188] Her wish, expressed merely to her husband and not even voiced in prayer, accomplished the purpose, for when she returned, a short time later, she found an eighth candle. Finally, the sight of thirteen candles attested the sacredness of a place on which the feet of the saint had once rested while he was holding a confirmation.[189]

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[181] *Materials*, I, 358 (Abbott, II, 34).

[182] *Materials*, I, 464 (Abbott, II, 53).

[183] *Materials*, I, 438 (Abbott, I, 280).

[184] *Materials*, I, 449 (Abbott, I, 280).

[185] *Materials*, II, 118 (Abbott, I, 280–1).

[186] *Materials*, II, 120 (Abbott, I, 280–1). Charles Du Canda records several miracles of relighting of candles at Dommartin, *La Vie de S. Thomas* (S. Omer, 1615), pp. 237, 262–3.

[187] *Materials*, I, 401 (Abbott, II, 43).

[188] *Materials*, I, 311 (Abbott, II, 29).

[189] *Materials*, II, 171 (Abbott, I, 300–1).

There are many other curious and whimsical miracles attributed to the popular medieval saint. When Louis VII visited the tomb of the Martyr in 1177, he brought with him as an offering an enormous carbuncle, "the Regale of France," which Becket had desired even during his lifetime.[190] At the last moment Louis was loath to part with the stone, and began to bargain with the monks to be allowed to offer in its place double its value in gold. But the stone suddenly leaped from the ring and fixed itself in the shrine, whereupon Louis offered both stone and money. Miracles occurred in connection with the phials in which the Water of Canterbury was carried. St. Thomas played numerous pranks with the small earthenware containers which were first used, and caused cracks and leaks in them.[191] A fire was extinguished when one of the phials was thrown into it, though the phial itself was not melted.[192] Again, Austin of London tried in vain to melt a phial which had once contained a relic of St. Thomas.[193] Sometimes St. Thomas aided pilgrims to reach his tomb, usually those who were seeking recovery from some disease. In one case a madman penetrated through a hole in the wall to the tomb and emerged again safely afterwards, although a lithe youth, attempting the same feat, failed![194]

Two very curious miracles relate that an ill person, instead of recovering from his malady, was granted the blessing of a peaceful death.[195] A nun who was working a girdle for St. Thomas refused to seek shelter from an approaching storm, and though her back was drenched, neither her front nor the girdle received a drop of water.[196] Sometimes the miracles deal with very insignificant matters. A monk of Wenlock, for example, was cured of a redness that made him look tipsy before breakfast.[197] St. Thomas even aided in causing beer to ferment, but perhaps his intervention may be explained on the ground that the people intended to use the money earned by selling the beer for the purpose of visiting the tomb of the Martyr.[198] Manifestations of learning by ignorant people are not uncommon. Soon after the martyrdom, an ignorant woman leading the life of an anchorite wrote in an ecstasy, "Noli flere pro Archiepiscopo. Caput ejus in gremio Filii mei requiescit."[199] Again, a message in Latin was sent through a nun ignorant of that language.[200] The climax, perhaps, is reached in the case of a babe eight months old, restored to life but a short time before, which began to sing *Kyrie eleison* though it had never heard the words![201]

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[190] Herman Corner, *Chronicon*, *Materials*, II, 298 (or Eccard, *Corpus Historicum Medii Aevi* (Lipsiae, 1723), II, 747); *Materials*, IV, 265; *Saga*, I, 476–8; II, 212–22; Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera* (Rolls Series), I, 185; VIII, 158, 219.

[191] Benedict, *Materials*, II, 69–73, 134.

[192] *Materials*, I, 476.

[193] *Materials*, I, 464.

[194] *Materials*, II, 79 (Abbott, I, 268).

[195] *Materials*, II, 109–11 (Abbott, I, 276–7).

[196] *Materials*, II, 188 (Abbott, I, 309–10).

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[197] *Materials*, I, 532 (Abbott, II, 69).
[198] *Materials*, II,253 (Abbott, I, 328).
[199] *Materials*, III, 151 (Abbott, I, 236).
[200] *Materials*, II, 290.
[201] *Materials*, I, 360 (Abbott, II, 35).

## VIII

## LEGENDS OF ST. THOMAS (CONTINUED)

It may be of interest to notice the variety of means employed in the miracles. Cures were wrought by the blood of the Martyr; cases of blindness were healed by smearing the blood on the eyes of the blind,[1] or by applying a handkerchief soaked in the blood of the Martyr.[2] Many miracles were wrought through relics, the most common being garments which had been worn by the archbishop. The daughter of Ralph of Bourne was cured by being wrapped in the saint's pall;[3] a knight cured his child of a fit of terror by hanging around the boy's neck a shred of the Martyr's clothing;[4] a nun named Constance was healed by the saint's glove;[5] the mother of James, son of Clare, pushed some of the Martyr's hair clothing into the mouth of her dead boy to restore him to life;[6] Robert, a knight of Bromton, upon reaching Canterbury, was wrapped in the garment in which the saint fulfilled his martyrdom.[7] Sometimes water in which the relics had been washed proved effective.[8] A picture of the martyrdom engraved upon a silver tablet, according to the life of St. Edmund by the monk Eustace, was instrumental in producing miracles.[9] A monk was cured of dropsy by touching his body with a list of the saint's miracles.[10] In one instance, a knight who had bought a pretended relic of Thomas, was rewarded by the saint as though it were genuine.[11]

In many instances the healing was the result of a vision. Sometimes the cure was immediate, and sometimes dependent upon obedience to a command. An Irishman, afflicted with leprosy, had a vision in which the Martyr appeared to him, and striking him with his staff, said, "Arise, thou art healed."[12] A boy named William, son of a citizen of Canterbury, had a vision in which St. Thomas appeared and bade a monk take the boy a cup of his blood. The blood was not obtained until the third day, at which time the boy was healed.[13] To a certain Roger, who had been blinded for theft, the Martyr appeared, bearing three tapers, and promising relief from pain.[14] Hugh de Perac, thought by his friends to be dead, was revived after a vision in which the "Angel of the English" stood near him and touched him thrice, saying, "The Lord hath risen."[15] One of the most extreme visions connected with healing is that of a Templar, who saw St. Thomas plunging both feet into his intestines to eject his disease.[16] St. Thomas appeared in a vision to Richard, a monk of Reading, and told him that on that night he had a long journey before him, as he must cure a hundred and thirteen sick people.[17] Usually the saint appeared clothed in white and bearing his pastoral staff.[18] Sometimes he appeared with a blood-streak from his forehead across his nose and left cheek, as people had seen him after the martyrdom.[19] Usually in the visions of healing, St. Thomas appeared in person, but there are a few exceptions. A man named William Patrick was delivered from pain in the jaw by a vision in which he saw one who said that he was a clerk of the lord of Canterbury, but as the young man described to listeners the pallium of the Archbishop, he may have thought that he saw St. Thomas himself.[20] Griffin, a native of Wales, had a very picturesque allegorical dream, in which a white bird, typifying St. Thomas, gave him a lance, indicative of perfect health.[21]

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[1] *Materials*, I, 65; IV, 199 (Abbott, I, 240).
[2] *Materials*, II, 41.
[3] *Materials*, II, 54.
[4] *Materials*, II, 101–2 (Abbott, I, 274).
[5] *Materials*, II, 158 (Abbott, I, 294).
[6] *Materials*, I, 228–30; II, 255–7 (Abbott, II, 198–213).
[7] *Materials*, I, 187 (Abbott, II, 13).
[8] *Materials*, I, 213, 238–9, 353; II, 160.
[9] Bernard Ward, *St. Edmund* (London, 1903), p. 165.
[10] *Materials*, II, 252 (Abbott, I, 328).
[11] *Materials*, II, 292.

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[12] *Materials*, I, 221 (Abbott, II, 21).

[13] *Materials*, II, 55 (Abbott, I, 243); Anon. X.; *Saga*, II, 68–72.

[14] *Materials*, I, 420–3 (Abbott, II, 103).

[15] *Materials*, I, 397–8 (Abbott, II, 41–2).

[16] *Materials*, I, 440 (Abbott, II, 50).

[17] *Materials*, I, 417–9 (Abbott, II, 48).

[18] See the vision of Eilward of Westoning, *Materials*, I, 155–8; II, 173–82 (Abbott, II, 80–102).

[19] See the vision of Yngelrann of Golton, *Materials*, I, 195–8; II, 219–20 (Abbott, II, 118–128).

[20] *Materials*, II, 46 (Abbott, I, 255).

[21] *Materials*, II, 145–7 (Abbott, I, 388).

The making of a pilgrimage was, of course, one of the most common methods of obtaining healing. Sometimes the cure took place on the way to Canterbury, as in the case of Thomas of Beverly,[22] but usually it occurred after the sick person had reached the place of the martyrdom.[23] Sometimes the cure occurred only after long supplication at the tomb;[24] a blind man was obliged to remain at Canterbury for two weeks before receiving his sight.[25] Often improvement was felt on the way to Canterbury, and the cure was completed there.[26] Occasionally the cure at the cathedral was only partial, and was completed on the return home.[27] Occasionally, too, the pilgrim left Canterbury disappointed and was healed on his way home.[28] Sometimes merely the vow of a pilgrimage was sufficient to bring aid.[29] Agnes of Cornwall won her suit against her stepson after apparent defeat, by vowing a pilgrimage to Canterbury.[30] Sometimes people were cured as a result of vows made by somebody else, and then the person receiving the blessing was bound by the other's vow.[31]

Another method was to make an offering of money for recovery of the sick or attainment of some desired end.[32] Frequently a piece of money was tied to the body of the patient. Possibly the first instance of this kind is that of Wivelina of Littlebourne, who was healed when she was at the point of death because her daughter tied to her head a *denarius* to be offered to the Martyr if she recovered.[33] Sometimes a coin intended as an offering was fastened about the neck of a pilgrim.[34] Sometimes an annual payment of money was promised,[35] and sometimes both an offering and a promise of a yearly tribute were made.[36] Alms were also given to the poor in the name of the Martyr to effect a cure.[37] William explains why St. Thomas heeds vows and accepts money.[38] St. Thomas hears men not for his own sake, but for theirs, that they may receive the benefit of well-doing. In regard to the receiving of men's gifts, William advances a rather singular theory. Since in his lifetime the Martyr was obliged to spend upon his attendants large sums which death made it impossible to repay, he wished after his death to provide indemnity for his creditors, that he might not remain under perpetual obligation.

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[22] *Materials*, I, 182.
[23] *Materials*, II, 89, etc.
[24] *Materials*, I, 166; 174–5.
[25] *Materials*, II, 150 (Abbott, I, 291).
[26] *Materials*, II, 74 (Abbott, I, 266–7); *Materials*, II, 101–2 (Abbott, I, 273); *Materials*, I, 213–4 and II, 245 (Abbott, II, 179–184); *Materials*, II, 245 (Abbott, I, 323–4).
[27] *Materials*, II, 243 (Abbott, I, 321–2).
[28] *Materials*, II, 149–50 (Abbott, I, 290); *Materials*, II, 203.
[29] *Materials*, I, 226; I, 253–6 and II, 261–3 (Abbott, II, 220–237).
[30] *Materials*, II, 248 (Abbott, I, 325).
[31] *Materials*, I, 169–70; I, 251 (Abbott, II, 23); I, 526 (Abbott, II, 65–6).
[32] *Materials*, I, 200, 299, 328; II, 156–7.
[33] *Materials*, II, 151 (Abbott, I, 291). See also *Materials*, I, 169.
[34] *Materials*, I, 334–6 (Abbott, II, 31–2).

The offering of a candle was also a favorite means of appealing to the Saint. A lady in Essex was saved from death after childbirth by her nurse, who persuaded the woman's husband to offer to St. Thomas a candle as long and thick as the lady's body.[39] Usually the cure occurred as soon as the patient had been measured for a candle,[40] but in the case of a clerk named Ralph the improvement began only when the candle was lighted at Canterbury.[41] The expression, "Measure me for St. Thomas," came to be a commonplace.[42] Instead of a candle, a silver thread was vowed by the mother of Robert of Rochester, who had been drowned in the Medway.[43] Even waxen models were sometimes used to effect a cure:[44] waxen arms and legs were offered;[45] Guy promised a waxen image of his horse if it were found;[46] a woman cured her horse's eye by means of a waxen model;[47] and a waxen anchor was vowed for the recovery of some iron ones.[48]

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[35] *Materials*, I, 187; II, 182.
[36] *Materials*, II, 157 (Abbott, I, 291).
[37] *Materials*, II, 114.
[38] *Materials*, I, 327 (Abbott, II, 31).
[39] *Materials*, II, 92 (Abbott, I, 271).
[40] *Materials*, II, 64 (Abbott, I, 263); II, 94 (Abbott, I, 272); II, 106 (Abbott, I, 275); II, 153 (Abbott, I, 292); II, 227 (Abbott, I, 320).
[41] *Materials*, I, 176–7.
[42] Abbott, II, 257.
[43] *Materials*, II, 126 (Abbott, I, 319).
[44] *Materials*, II, 114.
[45] *Materials*, II, 101–2 (Abbott, I, 273).
[46] *Materials*, I, 282.

Many cures were effected in places sanctified by St. Thomas. Miracles were afterward performed in places where he had rested.[49] Emeline, a lady of Chaumont, was healed by lying where St. Thomas had slept as her guest.[50] Newington was the scene of many miracles because the archbishop, shortly before his death, while on a journey from Canterbury to London, had dismounted from his horse to confirm some children there.[51] Sometimes cures were wrought in chapels dedicated to St. Thomas.[52] A paralyzed woman was cured even on ground on which a chapel was to be erected.[53] The cathedral where he was buried was especially sanctified, and more miracles were performed there than at any other place; Benedict compares the crypt to the pool of Bethesda.[54]

But by far the largest number of the miracles of St. Thomas were wrought by the "Water of St. Thomas." This was a mixture supposedly compounded of water and the blood of the Martyr. The early narrators tell us that immediately after the martyrdom the blood was carefully preserved;[55] the monks watched all night before the high altar, on which the body had been placed, and received the blood that flowed from it.[56] The first miracle related by Fitzstephen involved the dilution of the blood, and the writer supposes that this was the origin of the custom of mixing the blood with water and distributing it to pilgrims.[57] It was found that the smallest particle was sufficient to endow a vessel with miraculous properties. A monk was appointed to mix and distribute the water.[58]

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[47] *Materials*, II, 144.

[48] *Materials*, I, 300–1; II, 215 (Abbott, II, 113).

[49] *Materials*, II, 428.

[50] *Materials*, I, 451. Cf. *Materials*, II, 103–4 (Abbott, I, 274).

[51] *Materials*, II, 164ff (Abbott, I, 297ff); *Materials*, I, 310. Other places where the saint had confirmed were also honored, *Materials*, II, 171.

[52] *Materials*, I, 518–20 (Abbott, II, 60).

[53] *Materials*, I, 401 (Abbott, II, 42).

[54] *Materials*, II, 47 (Abbott, I, 260).

[55] *Materials*, II, 439ff.

[56] Guernes (ed. Walberg), ll. 5746–8.

[57] *Materials*, III, 146. Cf. ll, 42–3. See above, p. 156.

[58] *Materials*, II, 131, 133?

Sometimes cures were performed by drinking the Water;[59] sometimes by washing,[60] touching,[61] or sprinkling the body with it;[62] and sometimes it was both swallowed and used externally.[63] Revivifications were accomplished by pouring some of the Water into the mouth,[64] or by sprinkling it upon the body.[65] On one occasion, when a young man at the point of death begged for some of the Water of St. Thomas, and there was none available, a friend drew some clear water from the well and gave it to the sick man, telling him it was the Water of St. Thomas. At once the patient recovered and left his bed.[66] But in a similar instance the supposed Water of St. Thomas produced no effect, and the deception was exposed in a vision.[67]

There are numerous instances of multiplication, preservation, restoration, and disappearance of the Water. One of the miracles of multiplication was reported by the monks of Colchester Abbey.[68] Sometimes, although the wax stopping of the phial was lost, the Water remained.[69] William, a priest of Bourne, after giving away some of the blood, found that he had as much as before.[70] The blood which had oozed through a wooden vessel was restored in it the next day for a woman named Ulviva.[71] On the other hand, the Water mysteriously disappeared in the hands of people who were not worthy. Water given to a Pardoner, whose intentions were suspected by Benedict, was found to have disappeared.[72] An enemy of the saint, who intended to profane the Water, found two bottles empty.[73]

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[59] *Materials*, II, 68 (Abbott, I, 265); II, 74 (Abbott, I, 66); II, 96–7 (Abbott, I, 273), etc.

[60] *Materials*, II, 95 (Abbott, I, 272).

[61] *Materials*, II, 116 (Abbott, I, 278).

[62] *Materials*, I, 230–1 (Abbott, II, 18).

[63] *Materials*, II, 170–9; II, 183 (Abbott, I, 306–7).

[64] *Materials*, I, 200–2; II, 238–9 (Abbott, II, 162–9); *Materials*, I, 160–2; II, 229–34 (Abbott, II, 128–45).

[65] *Materials*, I, 230–1 (Abbott, II, 18).

[66] *Materials*, II, 216 (Abbott, I, 317).

[67] *Materials*, I, 384 (Abbott, I, 317, note 5).

[68] *Materials*, II, 50 (Abbott, I, 257).

[69] *Materials*, II, 148 (Abbott, I, 289).

[70] *Materials*, II, 52.

[71] *Materials*, II, 49.

[72] *Materials*, II, 53; (Abbott, I, 257).

[73] *Materials*, II, 135.

Liveva of Dareuth, who had stolen some of the Water, lost both what she had stolen and what she had previously.[74] A man in Bedfordshire, who refused to give of the Water to a poor man, lost it and was unable to supply a rich man, whom he wished to accommodate.[75] A woman was warned by the breaking of her pyx that she should leave the house of a Jewess.[76] It may be suspected, though, that such accidents became too numerous to carry much significance, for wooden pyxes ceased to be used, and their place was taken by lead and tin phials.[77]

Transformations of the Water were frequent. Turbert, of Canterbury, found the contents of his phial changed to milk, but when he poured some of it into various vessels, one vessel was found to contain water.[78] Several instances of the change of the Water into blood are recorded,[79] and one case of its being turned into oil.[80] Sometimes the Water of St. Thomas served as a reminder of duty, by flowing out of the pyx at critical moments.[81] Possibly the most curious miracle connected with the Water is its use by a pilgrim to preserve from fire a house at Rochester, where he had been received for the sake of the Martyr.[82] He leaped upon the roof, placed the phial on the end of a stick, and drove back the flames, as though with a spear![83]

Occasionally, a healing resulted as a direct answer to prayer, and without the use of the Water, or the making of a vow of pilgrimage or gift.[84] There is one instance of praying towards Canterbury.[85] Sometimes a person was cured upon the invocation of someone else.[86] An interesting case is that of an epileptic Canon of Oseney, who was healed through the intercession of a namesake of the Martyr, whom the Archbishop had commended while he was yet alive.[87] All possible methods seem to have been employed in the case of James, son of the Earl of Clare: relics and the Water of St. Thomas were used, as the mother prayed incessantly; she vowed to bring him to the tomb if he were restored, and to make a pilgrimage herself on bare feet. The boy revived.[88]

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[74] *Materials*, II, 131.
[75] *Materials*, II, 135.
[76] *Materials*, II, 69–73. (Abbott, I, 265.)
[77] *Materials*, II, 134 (Abbott, I, 285).
[78] *Materials*, I, 354–7 (Abbott, II, 33).
[79] *Materials*, II, 189 (Abbott, I, 310).
[80] *Materials*, I, 451.
[81] *Materials*, II, 197–201 (Abbott, I, 311).
[82] *Materials*, II, 186 (Abbott, I, 309).
[83] The *Saga* narrates a miracle wrought by "the water of St. Thomas, Well," II, 92–100. For the origin of the legend of this well, see p. 201, ff.
[84] *Materials*, I, 395–6 (Abbott, II, 40–41); *Materials*, II, 47 (Abbott, I 256); *Materials*, II, 92, etc.
[85] *Materials*, II, 199.

Partial cures are common among the miracles of St. Thomas. Benedict, especially, gives instances in which the cure was not complete.[89] William, speaking of Agnes the leper, accounts for her incomplete cure by saying that she left Canterbury too soon, owing to the pressing nature of her brother's business,[90] but in some other cases the failure to receive a complete cure is considered a punishment for sin or disobedience. When Robert, a knight of Bromton, was healed of dropsy, his feet still showed some traces of the disease, a result of his not obeying the saint in coming all the way to Canterbury on foot.[91]

In a very few cases the cures were revoked. Benedict is unable to account for the relapse in the case of Randulf of Langton, a leper, but feels sure that it was by the judgment of God.[92] A man who was much beloved by St. Thomas in his lifetime, being grievously afflicted, went to the tomb, prayed for his recovery, and was healed. But afterwards he began to fear that bodily health might not promote the health of his soul. He therefore prayed, that if it was not for the good of his soul, he might have his old sickness again.[93] The illness returned. Caxton's version of the *Golden Legend* relates a similar instance of a blind man, who feared that he would see too many of the vanities of the world, and who therefore prayed that he might be blind again. His request was granted.[94]

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[87] *Materials*, I, 509 (Abbott, II, 58).

[88] *Materials*, I, 228–30; II, 255–7 (Abbott, II, 198–210).

[89] *Materials*, II, 61–2 (Abbott, I, 261); *Materials*, II, 115–7 (Abbott, I, 278).

[90] *Materials*, I, 216 (Abbott, II, 19–29).

[91] *Materials*, I, 188 (Abbott, II, 13–14).

[92] *Materials*, II, 183 (Abbott, I, 306–7).

[93] St. Antoninus of Florence, *Opus Chronicum* (Lugduni, 1586), II, 707; *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Graesse (Lipsiae, 1840), p. 69; Caxton, *Golden Legend*, ed. F. S. Ellis (Temple Classics), IV, 60; Mirk's *Festial*, ed. T. Erbe, E. E. T. S., Ex. Ser., XCVI, 43.

[86] *Materials*, II, 93 (Abbott, I, 271–2); *Materials*, II, 188 (Abbott, I, 309) etc.

Miracles due to the power of St. Thomas continued for many years. The *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum* tells us that once, when the Abbess of Laycock was ill with a fever, Edmund promised that he would send her a physician who would heal her more quickly than was possible by any art.[95] He sent her some of the blood of St. Thomas, and the woman was immediately cured. In the Letter Books of the Monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury, there is a letter probably written by Richard II to William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury, which speaks of a new miracle which had recently been performed at the shrine of St. Thomas upon a foreigner.[96] The letter was written about 1393 or 1394.

The Egerton version of *The Travels of John Mandeville* contains an interpolation relating to a miracle of St. Thomas of Canterbury.[97] As both the Egerton and the Cotton MS. versions are dated the second decade of the fifteenth century, the interpolation can not be prior to 1420.[98] The island of Thule, "þe ferrest ile of þe werld inhabited with men," was once overrun by wild beasts, half lions and half horses, and so swift of foot that no man might escape them. Once when the Christian king of that country was very ill and seemingly near death, St. Thomas appeared to him, and told him that if he would build a church in his honor, he would restore him to health and expel the beasts. As soon as the cornerstone of the church was laid, the king was healed, and the beasts never reappeared.

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[94] *Loc. cit.*

[95] Bernard Ward, *St. Edmund* (London, 1903), pp. 60–1. This miracle may be dated approximately by the fact that St. Edmund died in 1240.

[96] The letter is given in A. P. Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, pp. 341–2. It speaks of the value of such miracles in opposing the evils of the time, when many enemies beset the faith, a reference perhaps, as Stanley suggests, to the doctrine of Wycliffe or the growth of Lollardism (*op. cit.*, p. 338). Cf. *Literae Cantuariensis*, ed. J. B. Sheppard (Rolls Series; London, 1889), III, 27–29, where it is translated from the French.

[97] *The Buke of John Maundeuill*, ed. G. F. Warner (London, 1889; printed for the Roxburghe Club), p. 220.

[98] *Op. cit.*, p. xii.

Dean Stanley prints a document certifying a miracle which occurred in 1445.[99] A young Scotchman, afflicted from his birth, regained the use of his feet at Canterbury. Testimony to his condition before his cure was furnished by two men from his native town, who recognized him and asserted that he had been a cripple. Finally, among the *Christ Church Letters* there is a letter from the Prior of St. Mary's, Coventry, to the Prior of Christ Church, written ca. 1474, referring to a miracle which he had investigated.[100] No particulars are given; "it can only be guessed that some sufferer living in Warwickshire had either visited the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, or that he had specially invoked the saint without leaving his own home, and that the result had been remarkable and satisfactory."[101] Certainly, then, as late as the latter part of the fifteenth century, miracles were still occurring as a result of the devotion to St. Thomas, and probably they continued to the Reformation.

Although miracles and visions are to a large extent inseparable, and the treatment of visions of St. Thomas has therefore been largely anticipated in the foregoing, a special study of them may throw additional light upon the legends of St. Thomas. For convenience in treatment, the visions may be classified as follows:

1. Miraculous visions.
2. Visions of command.
3. Visions of warning.
4. Prophetic visions.
5. Visions of encouragement.
6. Imitative visions.
7. Allegorical visions.

The first group has already been treated in the discussion of miracles, for many of the miracles were attended by visions. One such miracle, however, may be mentioned, in which St.

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[99] *Op. cit.*, pp. 342–3, 338–40. Cf. J. B. Sheppard, *Christ Church Letters* (Camden Society, 1877), p. xxi.

[100] *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

[101] *Op. cit.*, p. xix.

Thomas consecrated a church after his death.[102] Becket had promised a certain wealthy friend, named Beimini, to consecrate a church for him. The death of Thomas intervened, and another bishop prepared to render the service, but Beimini was loath to allow anyone but St. Thomas to perform the consecration. During the night the saint appeared to him and told him that he had come to fulfill his promise and that he would leave a little golden cross as a token of the consecration. The next morning the church was filled with a sweet odor and appeared as if it had been sprinkled inside and out, though it was dry to the touch. Afterward St. Thomas worked miracles at the church.

The visions of command, as we have seen, sometimes gave directions for the obtaining of a cure. Occasionally, instead of healing a suppliant, St. Thomas appeared to him and told him to go elsewhere. He sent a blind woman for cure to the tomb of St. Remigius, first bishop of Lincoln.[103] A paralytic woman went first for healing to the tomb of St. Hugh, but her story was discredited by the subdean, and she came to St. Thomas.[104] Before his tomb she fell asleep from weariness. St. Thomas appeared to her in a dream and bade her return to St. Hugh. She did so, and recovered the use of her hands. Among the miracles of Dommartin, there is one which tells of a man named Rumauld, who in company with several others was on a pilgrimage to Canterbury.[105] While he was sleeping on board ship, St. Thomas appeared to him, and bade him return and visit instead the Monastery of Dommartin. Rumauld could not persuade his companions to abandon the pilgrimage to Canterbury; they went on, but no miracle occurred to reward their efforts. Then the pilgrims realized that the vision had been a true one, and they obeyed it by going to Dommartin.

Commands to erect a cross or build a chapel were frequently given in visions. Often the vision appeared to one person, and the command was addressed to another. The saint appeared worthy man, Robert, the son of Elgar, who would be the first person she would see, and whom she should bid, in the name of the saint, to erect a cross at the place where she had had the vision.[106] A certain Brother Robert had a vision in which the Earl of Albemarle was commanded to build a chapel in Hedon (Holdernesse), but the Earl was sceptical of the vision and refused to comply unless the brother would swear that his message had not been prompted by a desire of gain.[107] Near Devizes, a deaf man was told by the Apostle Thomas and the Martyr Thomas to go to Priest Alured and command him to build a chapel to the Martyr in the marketplace.[108] Then the same two saints appeared to a blind man commanding him to go with the deaf man to a certain Ralph, the head of the town, and bid him cut down a tree, which would be found supernaturally marked, and erect a cross from the wood. When the commands had been obeyed, miracles began to occur at the place, and the blind man and the deaf man were the first to obtain the benefit of their obedience.

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[102] *Saga*, II, 130–34.

[103] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J. F. Dimock (Rolls Series), VII, 28.

[104] *Op. cit.*, VII, 122–3.

[105] *Anecdota Bedae, Lanfranci, et Aliorum*, ed. J. A. Giles, (Caxton Society, Vol. XII; London, 1851), pp. 138–9. Charles Du Canda, *La Vie de S. Thomas* (S. Omer, 1615), p. 227.

The life of Becket by Cola relates an interesting vision in which the command springs from compassion and is given by example rather than precept.[109] St. Catherine of Bologna had devoted herself to prayer so continuously that her religious sisters began to fear for her physical and mental welfare, and begged her to curtail her devotional exercises. In her perplexity St. Thomas appeared to her, and after making a sign for her to observe his actions, he began to pray, then he rested awhile; he prayed again, and then devoted some time to rest. Then he drew near to St. Catherine and held out his hand for her to kiss. She awoke, and kissed his hand before he disappeared.

The miscellaneous nature of commands given in visions can be illustrated by a few examples. The son of a certain Stephen to Seivia, a blind young woman, and told her she would meet a was exhorted to become a monk.[110] A Saracen noted for good works was commanded to be baptized.[111] Ives of Lynn was commanded to say twenty Paternosters for the soul of the father of St. Thomas, in order that he and his companions might not perish in a tempest.[112] A man who was building a hospital in honor of St. Thomas was directed to a place where he could find water, and later given instructions for procuring a book for the chapel.[113] The trivial character of the subject-matter of some of the visions may be indicated by a vision of two children who were troubled over the loss of a cheese.[114] They both dreamed, and were directed to an old churn, where the cheese had been placed and forgotten.

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[106] *Materials*, I, 240 (Abbott, II, 22).

[107] *Materials*, I, 224 (Abbott, II, 22).

[108] *Materials*, I, 531 (Abbott, II, 68–9).

[109] John Morris, *The Life and Martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket* (London, 1885), II, 509–10.

Prophetic visions are very common in the biographies of Becket. Benedict in a vision heard a song prophesying the beginning of miracles.[115] Again, St. Thomas himself appeared to Benedict, who had grieved sorely for him, and consoled the monk by the promise of great and comforting things shortly to occur.[116] Sometimes the prophecies dealt with political events or matters of general concern. During the rebellion in 1174, St. Thomas signified in a vision to a man named Walvord the deliverance of England.[117] Shortly after Easter, 1171, when there was fear that enemies of the Archbishop might carry away the body, a monk who was ill had a vision which was interpreted to mean that a terror from God should avert some danger from the Cathedral.[118] When he awoke and began to pray, there followed a severe tempest, with lightning, thunder, and floods of rain. In 1241, a priest had a vision in which he saw an archbishop approach the defences of the Tower of London which Henry was at that time erecting, and with a blow of his crozier fell the whole structure to the ground.[119] The priest then inquired of a clerk who attended the archprelate, who the archbishop was, and was told that it was St. Thomas of Canterbury. In the morning it was found that the walls about the Tower, costing about twelve thousand marks, had been destroyed. But sometimes the visions had only a personal significance. Robert Fitz-Jocelin, for example, a knight in Essex, was informed by Thomas of his approaching death, but encouraged by the promise of being with the Saint.[120]

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[110] *Materials*, I, 197.
[111] *Materials*, I, 534 (Abbott, II, 70).
[112] *Materials*, II, 216 (Abbott, I, 316–7).
[113] *Materials*, I, 530 (Abbott, II, 67–68).
[114] *Materials*, II, 153–5 (Abbott, I, 293).
[115] *Materials*, II, 24; *Saga*, II, 64.
[116] *Materials*, II, 34; *Saga*, II, 66.
[117] *Materials*, I, 489.
[118] *Materials*, II, 77 (Abbott, I, 268).

Sometimes the note of warning was prominent in a vision. St. Thomas appeared three times to a leper and bade him warn Jordan, son of Eisulf, of the results of failing to keep his vow of pilgrimage.[121] A boy received a vision in which he was bade to tell the dean and canons at Salisbury that unless they made a procession around the city, a great storm would fall upon it.[122] Henry of London was warned by the saint to return by another ship than the one in which he had come to Norway, as that one would be wrecked.[123] Several visions of warning concerned King Henry. Giraldus Cambrensis recounts two such dreams. In one of them St. Thomas was seen brandishing a sword and threatening to strike at the king.[124] When Walter Daumartin related the vision to him, the king informed him of the loss of Chateauroux, which they interpreted as the chastisement of the saint. About the same time a certain good and learned man heard in his sleep a voice which bade him look upon the ground and read.[125] There he read the judgment that would befall the king: the rebellion of his sons, and finally his place of sepulchre. At one time the Saint appeared to the king himself with a frowning countenance, and warned him that he must amend his life if he expected to entertain any hope for the future.[126] As a token, the former archbishop predicted that on that same night, the king would break his arm, a prophecy which was fulfilled. The king heeded the warning, and displayed signs of penitence. After this, St. Thomas appeared to him again, this time with a more pleasant countenance, and told him that if he continued as at present he might have some hope of future life.[127]

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[119] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series), IV, 93–4.

[120] *Materials*, II, 109 (Abbott, I, 276).

[121] *Materials*, I, 160–2; II, 229–34 (Abbott, II, 128–45).

[122] *Materials*, II, 129–30 (Abbott, I, 284–5).

[123] *Materials*, II, 212 (Abbott, I, 316–7).

[124] *Opera*, VIII, 251–2.

[125] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 252–3.

[126] *Saga*, II, 180–2.

Several individuals practically became mediums for the dissemination of warnings and commands received from St. Thomas. Emma of Halberton, for example, was especially favored. First, there came a vision in which the Martyr said to her, "Thy hand is my hand. Whomsoever thou shalt bless shall be healed of his infirmity."[128] But just as she was about to receive the divine power she was awakened. In another vision her mother was warned to continue her customary three masses a week and a candle for her dead husband, as long as she had a farthing; in still another her mother was commanded to dismiss her maid-servant. Again, she received a warning for a kinsman of hers who had sinned and had not repented. Godelief, a woman of Laleham, in a vision received a message from St. Thomas concerning various members of her church which reads like the judgments pronounced upon the seven churches of Asia.[129]

Sometimes St. Thomas appeared in visions to encourage those who believed in him. He appeared to a monk of Canterbury named Thomas and assured him that the names of the monks and the clerks of that church were written in the book of life.[130] St. Edmund received three such visions of St. Thomas.[131] In the first he was instructed to follow the example of him whose martyrdom was depicted on his small seal, namely St. Thomas.

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[127] Another vision of King Henry resulted in improving the relations between him and Benedict. The king had taken a strong dislike to Benedict, who was then Prior of Canterbury. The king dreamed that he fell through a bridge and hung suspended only by the arms above the chasm. When he had vainly invoked all the other saints, Benedict appeared and bade him call upon St. Thomas. Henry did so, and was immediately extricated. *Materials*, II, 448; I, 493–4.

[128] *Materials*, I, 194–5 (Abbott, II, 15–16).

[129] *Materials*, I, 198–9.

[130] Gervase, *Historical Works*, ed. William Stubbs (Rolls Series; London, 1880), I, 18–19.

[131] Wilfrid Wallace, *Life of St. Edmund of Canterbury* (London, 1893), pp. 332–5.

In the second vision, he was exhorted to act manfully. When St. Edmund was about to kiss the Martyr's foot, the latter withdrew it, but added as comfort that the time would come when St. Edmund would kiss him upon the mouth. In a third vision, the Martyr displayed the wounds on his head, and when questioned by St. Edmund about his adversaries, St. Thomas replied, "You will deal with them as so many dumb cattle."

Some of the visions in which St. Thomas appeared after death recall Biblical stories of appearances of Jesus. Three men on board ship ran upon a shoal and were in great distress. Suddenly, while they were in prayer, St. Thomas appeared to them in glistening white garments, walking upon the waves. Catching hold of the ship he drove it far into the deep.[132] As we have seen, St. Thomas appeared to many after his death, displaying the scars of his wounds.[133]

Occasionally one finds an allegorical vision. To Bartholomew, Bishop of Exeter, who sorrowed exceedingly because of the death of Thomas, a man appeared in a dream and asked why he was grieving.[134] "Concerning our lord of Canterbury, who is dead." "It is true," answered the man, "that he is dead, but his hands and arms are living." Benedict explains that the hands of St. Thomas were living, because of the works which he was doing, and his arms were felt in his judgments. The *Saga* elaborates the interpretation. "The arms must needs betoken revenge on people who bore him malice and enmity, but the hands must point to miracles and saintly deeds."

The number and variety of the miracles and visions dealing with St. Thomas serve to emphasize the hold which the slain archbishop of Canterbury had upon the mind of the people during the Middle Ages. Their faith may seem to us like simple credulity, and yet on every hand, they were confronted with visible evidence of the Martyr's power. With continued emphasis upon the material benefits to be derived from him, it is no wonder that he became so popular. Nor is it any wonder that the favorite English saint represents what is perhaps a climax in miracle-working, leaving unrepresented no type of Biblical miracle, and performing many more than are recorded in the Bible.

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[132] *Materials*, I, 302–3; II, 214.
[133] Above, p.
[134] *Materials*, II, 28–29; *Saga*, II, 50.

## IX

## Local Traditions

In addition to the legends that have been considered, there were many local traditions associated with the name of Becket. In Canterbury Cathedral there was a well which was long believed to have miraculous properties. After the murder, according to the legend, the dust and the blood from the pavement were swept into the well ,with the result that where before there had been only a small stream, there was now an abundant spring.[1] The earliest account of the Well of St. Thomas is found in the *Polistorie*, a Norman French History of Canterbury Cathedral which dates from the early fourteenth century.

> So afterward the place was swept, and the dust which had been collected from the floor of the church was thrown into the place of which we have spoken above. Through it the power of God was soon abundantly manifested by his gracious virtue, and the merit of the martyr was made known to all people. The dried blood had scarcely dissolved when the stream, which had been quite small, increased, and its natural color changed: it took on once the color of milk and four times the color of blood. And then it returned to its former condition. The water commenced to flow abundantly from the source, and thereafter formed a plenteous fountain. Then by means of it many afflicted people were graciously healed of divers maladies.[2]

The well is also mentioned in the narratives, by Schassek, a Bohemian, and by Tetzel of Nuremberg, of the Journey of a Bohemian Ambassador to Canterbury in 1446; and in a work by William Thomas, a Clerk of the Privy Council in the reign of Edward VI, which has been published under the title of "The Pilgrim."[3] Schassek says that the waters had five times turned into blood and once into milk,[4] and Tetzel says that the water at St. Thomas's tide had five times turned into milk and blood.[5] Tetzel says that Thomas used to drink of the well daily, perhaps feeling that in this way the magical properties of the spring were partially explained. William Thomas, whose work reflects the change in the popular attitude toward Becket, accuses the monks of corrupting the fresh water of a well so that it appeared bloody.[6]

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[1] An account of the well is given in A. P. Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* (2nd American ed.), p. 272.

[2] An extract from the MS. (including the paragraph translated above) is given in Stanley, *op. cit.*, pp. 305–6.

[3] Ed. J. A. Froude (London, 1861).

[4] "Fons est in eo coenobio, cujus aquae quinquies in sanguinem, et seme, in lac commutatae fuerant, idque non multo ante, quam nos eo venissemusl factum esse dicitur." Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

The legend of the Well of St. Thomas seems to have originated from miracles which were said to have occurred to "the Water of St. Thomas," the mixture supposedly compounded of water and the blood of the Martyr.[7] The evolution of the legend may be somewhat as follows: (1) The belief in the curative properties of "the Water of St. Thomas" was widespread, and, as we have seen, was probably the most frequent means of cure employed in the miracles. (2) The miracle of the water being turned into milk occurs in William of Canterbury,[8] and the change of the water into blood occurs twice in Benedict.[9] (3) The miracles of the water are summarized in one of the offices in the Sarum Missal:

> Aqua Thomae quinquies varians colorem
> in lac semel transiit, quater in crucorem[10]

(4) The healing properties ascribed to "the Water of St. Thomas" were transferred to the waters of St. Thomas' Well. (5) The miracles of transformation associated with "the Water of St.

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[5] "Der hat sich zu Sanct Thomas Zeiten fünfmal verwandelt in Milch und Blut." Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

[6] Stanley, *op. cit.*, pp. 314–15, Percy Mackaye makes use of the tradition of the well in his play, *The Canterbury Pilgrims.* A vendor calls out,

> "Drops from the holy well: St. Thomas' well,
> That turned four times to blood and once to milk;
> Good for the humours, gout, and falling-sickness."
> (Act IV, p. 180.)

[7] See above, p. 188 ff; also *Materials*, II, Introduction, pp. xxx–xxxii, and the references there cited.

[8] *Materials*, I, 354.

[9] *Materials*, II, 189 ff.

[10] Proctor and Wordsworth, Fasc. I. col. cclviii. Quoted by A. J. Mason, *What Became of the Bones of St. Thomas?* (Cambridge, 1920), p. 117.

Thomas" were transferred to the waters of the well itself.[11]

In the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral may still be seen "Becket's Ghost." There is a stain on one of the pillars, only a few feet, it is thought, from the place where Becket was first buried, that bears an unmistakable likeness to a mitred Archbishop. The "ghost" is evidently the remains of an ancient painting on the column, but when and under what circumstances it was placed there remain a mystery.

The archbishops of Canterbury possessed a palace near Otford, whither they retired from time to time. It seems to have been a favorite resort of Becket, and several legends sprang up in connection with his residence there. It is said that when he first went to Otford, he found no water, and struck his staff into the dry ground, from which water immediately issued forth.[12] The waters from the spring fill a bath or chamber about thirty feet long and ten or twelve feet deep, which still bears the name of Becket's Well.[13] While he was at Oxford, it is said that he was disturbed in his devotions by the nightingale, which he banished forever from that place. A blacksmith who shod his horse amiss incurred the wrath of Becket, who invoked a curse upon the blacksmith, so that none of his trade have ever flourished there since.[14]

Polydore Vergil says that during the strife between Becket and the king, when he came to be generally reputed as the king's enemy, the archbishop happened to come to Stroud, and the inhabitants of that village, wishing to insult him in some way, cut off the tail of the horse on which he rode. As a punishment for their misdeed, the descendants of those who played the evil prank were born with tails, like the beasts.[15] In later versions of the tradition, the punishment was believed to affect all Kentish men,[16] and in one foreign version, it seems to have been believed to apply to other Englishmen as well. John Covel writes:

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[11] A similar suggestion is made by Dr. Mason, *loc. cit.*, though he does not trace the same steps. The *Saga* (I, 556–7) mentions St. Thomas' Well, but says nothing about its possessing miraculous properties, or about its undergoing the transformation into milk and blood.

[12] Edward Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* (2nd ed., Canterbury, 1717), III, 25.

[13] The dimensions are taken from Julia Cartwright, *The Pilgrim's Way from Winchester to Canterbury* (London, 1911), pp. 130–1.

[14] *English Topography* (ed. F. A. Milne, London, 1895), VI, 166. (The Gentleman's Magazine Library.)

> Some in Spain (to my knowledge) at this very day believe that the English especially the Kentish men, are born with Tails . . . for Curtailing Becket's Mule.[17]

Grafton says that the tradition arose from Roger Hoveden's statement that on Christmas Day the Archbishop excommunicated Robert de Brock for cutting off the tail of one of his horses on the preceding day.[18] He is probably right, though Hoveden is not the earliest authority for the incident. He seems to have taken the account of the excommunication from Fitzstephen.[19] Robert Manning of Brunne gives an alternate tradition.[20] According to this story, the punishment befell the Kentish men because they abused Austin the monk and his associates by tying fish-tails to their backs.[21]

Sussex has several traditions of Becket, owing to the fact that for many centuries an archiepiscopal manor was located at West Tarring. One may still visit an old building popularly known as "Thomas à Becket's Palace." The portion remaining, formerly known as the Rectory House, and consisting of two large rooms and a kitchen, seems to have been part of a large group of monastic buildings. The rooms are now used for a Sunday-school and for the purposes of a public hall. A woman who lived near the building told me that in her childhood she had gone to school there. The style of architecture suggests that the building is at least three hundred years later than the time of Becket.[22] Yet tradition not only affirms his residence there, but speaks of his brewhouse and menagerie. Near the Rectory House, it is said, there once stood a small cottage called the Brazinium or Brasenose, the brewhouse belonging to the manor, by means of which Becket supplemented his regular supply of beer. In the menagerie, according to one version of the tradition, he kept wild beasts,[23] though another says that he kept monkeys.[24] Not far from the Rectory House may still be seen some quaint houses, known as "Thomas à Becket's Cottages," and traditionally used as servants' quarters. They date, perhaps, from the fifteenth century.[25]

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[15] *Historia Anglica* (Dvaci, 1603), I, 553–4. William Lambarde retells the legend (from an earlier edition of Polydore Vergil) in *A Perambulation of Kent* (London, 1596), p. 396. Holinshed mentions the incident, but says nothing about the consequences to the posterity of those who did the deed. *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1807), II, 134.

[16] "Hereof commeth ye talke that Kentish men haue tayles." Richard Grafton, *A Chronicle at Large* (1569), p. 71, marginal note.

[17] *Some Account of the Present Greek Church* (Cambridge, 1722), preface xv.

[18] *Loc. cit.* See Hoveden (ed. Stubbs, Rolls Series), II, 14.

[19] *Materials*, III, 130. William of Canterbury mentions the excommunication, but does not give the same reason for it. *Materials*, I, 120. See above, p. 98.

[20] *The Story of England* (ed. F. J. Furnivall, Rolls Series), II, 527–8.

[21] In an edition of Sir Thomas Browne's works (by Simon Wilkin, London, 1835, III, 43, note), this tradition is quoted from Bailey, who says that "the scene of this lying wonder was not in Kent, but in Carne, in Dorsetshire."

Becket is also given credit by tradition for the introduction of fig trees into this part of Sussex. Adjoining the lot on which the Rectory House stands, there is a fig orchard, probably the largest in England, which is said to derive its origin from some old stocks in the rectory garden, the parent trees having been brought from Italy by Becket.[26] There is one tree still in existence which he is said to have set in the ground with his own hand. The trunk of this veteran tree is marked by a sign which reads, "The Remains of the Old Fig Tree Planted by Thomas à Becket About A. D. 1162." There is an alternate belief, however, that St. Richard of Chichester grafted fruit trees at Tarring.[27] Another tradition states that when the harvest is ripe a little band of *becca ficos* fly over from Italy to taste the fruit and disappear after it has been gathered.[28]

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[22] For a description of the building see John Wood Warter, *Appendicia et Pertinentiae* (London, 1853), pp. 183–8, and a tract entitled, *The Restoration of the Church of West Tarring* (C. Whittingham, Tooks Court, Chancery Lane), pp. 7–8. A brief account of the traditions may be found in J. Lee Osborn, *Worthing, With Its Surroundings* (Homeland Handbooks), pp. 42–3.

[23] J. W. Warter, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

[24] W. F. Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury* (London, 1862), II, 360.

[25] See J. L. Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

[26] T. W. Horsfield, *The History, Antiquities, and Topography of the County of Sussex* (London, 1835), II, 191; D. G. C. Elwes, *A History of the Castles, Mansions, and Manors of Western Sussex* (London, 1876), p. 233.

[27] W. E. A. Axon, *Bygone Sussex* (London, 1897), pp. 224–5.

[28] E. V. Lucas, *Highways and Byways in Sussex* (London, 1904), p. 156.

Many other legends connected with Becket are current in various parts of England. A local tradition supplies the scene for the narrow escape of Thomas from drowning in his youth, which two of his biographers report as a miraculous occurrence.[29] The spot is now called Wade's Mill, between Ware and St. Edmund's College.[30] Thomas Fuller speaks of "Becket's Path" near Clarendon.[31] According to popular story, when Becket lived at Clarendon, he walked every morning from his lodging to the king's palace. The ground on which he trod can still be distinguished, for the grass and grain that grow thereon are of a different hue from that of the rest. If tradition may be trusted, West Tarring was not the only place where Becket had a brewhouse. At Bramfield, where he was once a rector, there is a pond which bears the name of Becket's Pond, the water of which he is said to have used for brewing beer.[32] Since the thirteenth century there has existed a well, outside Northampton, dedicated to Thomas Becket. It is said that when the archbishop fled by night from Northampton in 1165, he paused there to drink, and for that reason it received the name of St. Thomas' Well. J. C. Coxe shows the falsity of the story and thinks that the spring became associated with Becket through some returned pilgrim, who had brought with him some of the "Canterbury Water," and who obtained permission of the proper authorities to empty the phial, containing water mingled with the blood of the saint, into the spring or well, which was then blessed and assigned to the protection of St. Thomas of Canterbury.[33] At Longbridge Deverill (in Warminster) Becket is said to have consecrated the church, and also to have visited the village "Revel." He went to the Revel dressed as a gentleman, but left it like a beggar dressed in rags.[34] A place in Kenchester bore the name of "Becket's Chair." Camden says,

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[29] See above, pp. 79–81.

[30] John Morris, *The Life and Martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket* (2nd ed., London and New York, 1885), I, 10.

[31] Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain* (London, 1837), I, 313.

[32] Matilda Pollard, in *Notes and Queries*, 10th series, I, 452.

[33] *The Records of the Borough of Northampton* (London, 1898), II, pp. 261–2.

[34] W. H. Hutton, *The English Saints* (London, 1903), p. 260, note 4. Hutton adds that the story of the change of clothes is probably a growth from that told by Fitzstephen. See above, p. 83.

> In a pool in this parish by the roadside abounding with fine trout, it is pretended Thomas Becket often appears. Whence the niche at Kenchester is called "Becket's Chair."[35]

It was popularly believed that Beauchief Abbey, in Derbyshire, was named from the head of Thomas, and that it was founded by one of the four knights who murdered him, in expiation of the crime.[36] Samuel Pegge, in *An Historical Account of Beauchief Abbey*, apparently establishes the fact that the abbey did not take its name from the head of Archbishop Becket. He quotes the first charter of the founder, "I have given for the building of an abbey the place which is called *Beuchef* in Doreheseles."[37] Evidently the place bore the name before the abbey was founded; Pegge thinks that it signifies the nature of the place, as do Beaumont, Beauchamps, etc. But Pegge is not successful in his second contention, "that the founder . . . had no hand in the murder of that Prelate, and consequently, that the house was not erected in Expiation of that Crime." He is right, of course, in saying that Fitz-Ranulf, the founder of the monastery, was not one of the four knights. But a Robert Fitzranulph, who had held the shrievalty of Nottingham and Derby, followed the four knights into the church, though he did not actually take part in the deed.[38] It is possible that he is the one who founded the monastery, and conceivable that he did so to expiate his sin of sanctioning the deed. The belief that such was his purpose, combined with the dedication to St. Thomas, would be sufficient to account for the tradition that Beauchief referred to the head of the saint.

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[35] Quoted in Ella Mary Leather, *The Folk-Lore of Herefordshire* (Hereford and London, 1912), p. 44.

[36] "Robertus filius Radulphi, dominus de Alfretona, Nortona, et Marneham, fuit unus e quatuor militibus qui beatum Thomam, Cantuariensem archiepiscopum, martirizavit; et postea monasterium *de bello capito* fundabat, in expatione hujuscemodi facinoris, tempore regis Henrici Secundi." Dugdale, *Monasticon*, II, 607, quoted in Samuel Pegge, *An Historical Account of Beauchief Abbey* (London, 1801), p. 12. He refers also to Dugdale, *Baronage*, I, 678 and Tanner, *Notitia*, p. 81, ed. 2nd.

[37] *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

[38] Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

One of the most remarkable of the English traditions concerning Becket is that which speaks of his visit, *in the year 1200*, to the Chapel of the Holy Cross in Colchester. The following extract occurs in a letter of indulgence written about 1406 for the benefit of those who should contribute toward the endowment of the Chapel:

> Also Seynte Thomas of Cannterbury in the Yere of our Lorde MCC came Riding for by the same Place infourmed by the holy gooste lighted and halowed the saide Hospitall and confermed the saide grannte and gaf his Pontifical Ring in tokenying.[39]

The foundation of this legend must be one of the visits that Becket made to Colchester before he became archbishop. He was there as chancellor of Henry in 1157, and J. H. Round has shown from two deeds that Thomas was at Colchester even earlier, between 1141 and 1148.[40]

In England, as elsewhere, there have been traditions associated with supposed relics. At Canterbury there is displayed a stone known as Becket's Shoe Buckle, which is said to be regarded devoutly by some modern Canterbury pilgrims. W. H. St. John Hope thinks that this crystal is the one referred to by Erasmus in his *Peregrinatio Religionis Ergo*.[41] At Kew Stoke Church, when a stone of unusual appearance was removed, there was found a vessel which contained in the bottom a dry black incrustation of what appeared to have been coagulated blood. It was believed to be a relic of St. Thomas of Canterbury which had been removed from Woodspring Priory at the time of its dissolution.[42]

The popularity of the former great English saint is attested by the large number of churches which have been dedicated to him, and by the many other ways in which his name has been preserved. According to an article in *The Church Quarterly Review*, sixty-three churches in England are known to be dedicated to St. Thomas Becket, and forty-one to St. Thomas, of which undoubtedly a large number are named after Becket.[43] Furthermore, nearly every church had a St. Thomas Altar. Bells were formerly baptized "Thomas" in honor of Becket.[44]

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[39] Quoted in Francis Grose and Thomas Astle, *The Antiquarian Repertory* (London, 1808), III, 347. The MS. (Stowe Charter 603), is in the British Museum.

[40] "Becket at Colchester," *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, New Series, XV (1919), 153–4.

[41] "On the English Medieval Drinking Bowls Called Mazars," *Archaeologia*, L, 142–3.

[42] *The Archaeological Journal*, VI (1849), 400–1. See also the note by J. H. MacMichael in *Notes and Queries*, 10th series, I, 452.

Owing to Becket's long exile in France, that country possesses almost as many legends regarding him as does England. It is only natural for a nation that admires a great man to attempt to claim him as its own, but the traditions that speak of the birth of Thomas Becket in France are rather contradictory, as they would have him born in three different places: at Plouy-lès-Visme en Vimeu (Artois), at La Neuville-Vault (Oise, near Marseille), and at Bapaume (Pas de Calais). A number of French writers have supported or repeated the tradition that Becket was born at Plouy-lès-Visme. Jacques Le Vasseur says that in his time (1571-1636) Becket was considered a native of Visme en Vimeu. In addition to the special veneration which the people of the village had for Becket, Le Vasseur adduces two arguments in support of the tradition: he heard it from his uncle, who died at the age of ninety-eight, and the latter, in turn, had received it from his uncle, Pierre le Vasseur, a priest; furthermore the surname of Becquet was commonly heard in that locality as a Gentile name.[45] Ignace remarks that support is lent to this theory of the birthplace of Thomas from the fact that in his day the surname of Becquet persisted in a noble family of the country of Vimeu.[46] Carlier, though not saying that Becket was born in Vimeu, says that he was descended from an ancient family in that province, which owned the estate of Plouic, in the parish of Vismes.[47] Colliette is quite positive about the matter.

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[43] "St. Thomas of Canterbury," *The Church Quarterly Review*, XLVII (January, 1899), 435–53.

[44] "Remarks on the Signs of Inns, etc." *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXXVIII (1) (April, 1818), 307.

[45] *Annales de l'Eglise de Noyon* (Paris, 1633), II, 900.

[46] Ioseph de Iesos Maria Ignace, *L'Histoire Ecclésiastique de la Ville d'Abbeville* (Paris, 1646), p. 158.

[47] L'Abbé Carlier, *Histoire du Duché de Valois* (Paris, 1764), I, 508–9.

> Il est certain que la terre de Plouic, paroisse de Vimmes, étoit le lieu de la naissance du Prélat e appartenait à sa maison.[48]

M. Darsy draws the following conclusion, "sans crainte d'errer":

> Saint Thomas serait né d'après une tradition constante, au Plouy-lès-Visme, fief qui est resté dans sa famille jusqu'au XVIe siècle.[49]

But this tradition rests entirely, as M. Renet has explained, on a resemblance of names.[50] A family named Becquet was in possession of a fief at Visme during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and this fact seems to have given rise to the tradition first that the relatives of Thomas Becket lived there, and finally that he himself was born there.

M. Graves says positively that Becket was born at La Neuville-sur-le-Vault.[51] The only evidence he submits is that there is a place near the village called the "Champ-Saint-Thomas," and that a chapel was established in 1173 at Milly-St.-Hilaire, in honor of the saint, by "les gentilhommes ses parents." Jean Buzelin seems to be the earliest authority for the statement that Becket was born at Bapaume,[52] and the assertion is repeated by P. Martin the hermit.[53] As Carlier remarks, it is doubtless because of this belief that the Abbé Destombes enrolled St. Thomas among the saints of the dioceses of Cambrai and Artois.[54] M. de Cardevacque likewise refers to the tradition.[55]

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[48] Louis-Paul Colliette, *Mémoires pour Servir à l'Histoire de Vermandois* (Cambrai, 1772), II, 359.

[49] "Recherches sur la Nationalité et sur la Famille de St. Thomas de Cantorbery," *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie*, XXVIII (1885), 244.

[50] "Saint Thomas Becket, Ses Historiens, Son Culte, Sa Naissance, Son Passage, Ses Parents dans le Beauvaisis," *Mémoires de la Société Académique d'Archaeologie, Sciences, et Arts du Departement de l'Oise*, XIII (1886), 70.

[51] *Statistique du canton de Marseille* (Oise), p. 57. Quoted in J. Corblet, *Hagiographie du Diocèse d'Amiens* (Paris and Amiens, 1874), IV, 623.

[52] *Annales Gallo-Flandriae* (Duaci, 1624), p. 244.

[53] *Histoire des Saints de la Province de Lille*, p. 669, cited by J. J. Carlier, "Souvenirs de Saint-Thomas de Cantorbery," *Annales du Comité Flamand de France*, VII (1863–4), 322.

[54] See *Vies des Saints des Diocèses de Cambrai et d'Arras* (Lille, 1887), IV, 329–333.

[55] "L'on croit S. Thomas originaire de Bapaume en Artois." A. de Cardevacque and A. Terninck, *L'Abbaye de Saint-Vaast* (Arras, 1865), I, 137.

Beauvais preserves several traditions connected with the relatives of the archbishop. The Abbé Deladrue, in speaking of the fief of Courcelles, which had since the twelfth century borne the name of Becquet, says:

> Quelques-uns même pensent que cette terre fut à Gilbert Becquet, qui l'aurait aliénée pour se procurer l'argent nécessaire à son départ pour les croisades. Quoi qu'il en soit, il est certain que la tradition locale veut que cette seigneurie ait appartenu aux ancêtres de Thomas de Cantorbéry, et que de temps immémorial, comme encore aujourd'hui, le hameau de Becquet a ce saint archevêque pour patron, et en célèbre annuellement la fête.[56]

Renet mentions traditions that Gilbert Becket, the father of Thomas, was born at Beauvais, and that the Becquets of that community were exiles from England because of their connection with him.[57] These traditions, of course, are without proof. "Nous ne savons donc pas si un seul des Becket de Beauvais descendait 'des parents exilés de saint Thomas,' comme l'ont avancé nos écrivains du Beauvais."[58] In fact the evidence, according to Renet, seems to be entirely to the contrary, "Tout conspire à prouver les Bécquet de Beauvais n'étaient ni les descendants des exilés de 1164, ni des parents quelconques de saint Thomas."[59] The tradition concerning Gilbert Becket's birth at Beauvais, as well as the claim by some historians that he was born at Rouen,[60] ignore the direct statement of William of Canterbury that he was born at Thierceville.[61]

Many of the French traditions associated with Becket are stories of dedications of churches. There are four churches about which there is a tradition that Becket either dedicated the church to himself, directed its dedication to himself, or prophesied that it would be dedicated to himself. One of these is the Church at St. Lô, about which there are two traditions. One says that the church was actually built by Thomas while he was in exile. According to the other version, the church was in the process of construction when Becket passed through St. Lô. There was a discussion at the time about whom it should be dedicated to. When Becket was consulted, he replied, "Let it be dedicated to the first saint who shall shed his blood for the Catholic faith." His murder in 1171 and canonization in 1173 led the people to recall his words and interpret them as a prophecy and direction with regard to himself.[62] The church was finished in 1174 and dedicated to the new martyr. It was pulled down in 1571, and rebuilt in its present situation in 1630. The building is used at present as a corn market with a theatre above. L'Huillier has shown, to the discredit of the tradition, that it is impossible to account for a visit of Becket to St. Lô.

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[56] *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Paul de Beauvais*, quoted by J. Corblet, *op. cit.*, p. 624.

[57] *Op. cit.*, p. 167.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

[60] See C. Hippeau, "Notice sur la Vie de Saint Thomas le Martyr, Poème de Garnier de Pont-Sainte-Maxence," *Memoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, XXIV (1859), pp. 252–3.

[61] *Materials*, I, 408.

> Jamais il ne pénétra en Normandie depuis les évènements de Northampton jusqu'à la paix de Freteval; et alors il se dirigea tout droit de Paris sur Rouen, et de là sur le nord pour s'embarquer.[63]

A similar legend is told concerning the dedication of a chapel at Lyons.

> Guichard Archevêque de Lyons & le Doyen Olivier s'entretenant un jour avec le Primat d'Angleterre dans la Place de saint Jean, lui montrèrent la nouvelle Paroisse qu'ils faisoient construire sur la montagne de Fourviere, & qu'on apperçoit de la Place même Il lui dirent en soûriant que leur dessein étoit de la faire consacrer sous le titre du premier Martyr qui auroit la gloire de verser son sang pour J. C. ou pour son Eglise: & que ce seroit sous son nom même qu'ils la dedieroient, s'il avait jamais ce bonheur; ce qui fut executé cinq où six ans après tout au plus tard.[64]

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[62] H. G. Knight, *An Architectural Tour in Normandy* (2nd ed., London, 1841), pp. 122–3; C. M. Church, "Reginald, Bishop of Bath," *Archaeologia*, L, 304, note A.

[63] A. L'Huillier, *Saint Thomas de Cantorbéry* (Paris, 1892), II, 550.

[64] Colonia, *Histoire Littéraire de la Ville de Lyon* (Lyons, 1730), II, 252. Dean Stanley retells the story with a little variation. (*Op. cit.*, p. 227.) Thomas is asked to whom the chapel should be dedicated, and he replies, "To the next martyr," whereupon his questioner remarks, "Perhaps then to you." As John Morris gives the story, it agrees in detail with the tradition about the church at St. Lô. (*The Life and Martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket*, 2nd ed., London and New York, 1885, II, 511–12.) The tradition is used in a modern play. See C. W. Barroud, *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, Act IV, Scene 9.

A third legend of this kind is associated with Touques (in Calvados-Orne). In 1164 after the flight from Northampton, Becket was passing through Normandy on his way to the Castle of Nonant. He stopped at the city of Touques, and was shown a church which the citizens were building. He inquired to whom they were going to dedicate the new church. "Lord archbishop," they replied, "we confess to our confusion that we have not thought of the matter; we shall be most happy to be enlightened on this matter by your reverence, and we shall hold your sentiment as an order." "Well," replied the pontiff, raising his eyes to heaven as if he had a presentiment of his own violent death, "you shall consecrate it to God under the name of the first martyr who shall suffer in his church the sword of the impious." Eight years later the building was completed, and the people recalled the words of the archbishop and dedicated the church to him.[65]

The same legend, with slight variations, is told concerning a church at Crépy.

> On rapporte que, dans le passage que Thomas Becquet avoit fait chez Philippe d'Alsace, le Prélat lui avoit demandé à quel Saint prétendoit dédier une église que le Comte faisoit bâtir dans le fauxbourg de Crépy. Au premier des Martyrs, respondit ce Seigneur. Mais, repliqua l'Archevêque, est-ce au premier de ceux qui l'ont été, ou qui le seront? Car l'Eglise ne cesse d'en avoir. L'entretien tomba là. L'évènement, qui procura le martyre à l'Archevêque de Cantorbery, fit rappeller le discours dans la suite. Aussitôt le Comte de Vermandois se détermina à dédier en l'honneur de ce Pontife l'église dont il s'aggissoit, comme au premier Martyr que l'église eut canonisé depuis leur conversation.[66]

It would be impossible to tell whether these stories sprang from a single legend and have simply been appropriated by different communities, or whether they grew up separately. It may be noted that the last story is more plausible than the others, for Becket was at Crépy in company with the Count of Flanders, shortly before his return to Canterbury.[67] This story, too, contains a detail which the others do not have: namely, the question of the archbishop, "Do you mean the first martyr who has been, or the first who shall be?"

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[65] Abbé Lecomte, "Une Légende Historique du Moyen-Age," *Revue de la Normandie*, Vol. VIII (1868), 174–5.

[66] Louis-Paul Colliette, *op. cit.*, II, 360. The Abbé Carlier, in telling the legend, says that the Count of Flanders had resolved to raise a church in the Fief of Bordes, in honor of St. Etienne the Martyr. The account does not tell whether the church was finally dedicated to Becket or to St. Etienne, though presumably it was to the former. (*Histoire du Duché de Valois*, Paris, 1764, I, 509–10.)

Several other churches in France, according to the popular belief, were dedicated by Becket. He is said to have dedicated the chapel of the château de Fontainebleau,[68] and a church at Moret is supposed to have been consecrated by him in 1166.[69] According to a tradition of several centuries standing, he laid the first stone of the church of Rosoy.[70] When he was preparing to return to England, says the hagiographer of Amiens, he passed through Doullens and there dedicated the church of Notre Dame, an event which was commemorated in a choir-window later destroyed.[71]

Many cities and towns in France preserve traditions concerning a visit of Becket. Among them is the village of Lisieux. When Guizot became the proprietor of the abbey and grounds of Val Richer in Normandy, an old peasant offered to show him the spot in the woods of Val Richer where a famous saint had conducted his meditations. Investigation disclosed the story that at some time during his exile Thomas had visited Lisieux, lived for a time at Val Richer, and while there had been in the habit of using a certain portion of the wood for his solitary meditations.[72] A fuller account of the tradition is given by M. Tapin.[73] In 1170, after making peace with Henry, Becket wished to prepare in solitude for the resumption of the administration of his diocese. He went to the abbey of Val Richer, led the life of a monk for a time, and chose a certain spot in the wood near by, for his meditation and preparation for death. During his stay at the abbey, he went to visit his friend, the Bishop Arnoult, and after celebrating mass in the village of Lisieux he left as a relic the episcopal robe in which he had officiated. This is still preserved at the Hospice at Lisieux. M. Tapin rejects the tradition because of the impossibility of finding any date, in view of the known facts of Becket's sojourn in France, at which the prelate could have made the journey to Lisieux.[74]

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[67] *Materials*, IV, 262.

[68] Felix Clement, *Histoire de la Musique Religieuse* (Paris, 1878), p. 301; Emile Michel, *La Forêt de Fontainebleau* (Paris, 1909), pp. 47–8.

[69] A. J. C. Hare, *South-eastern France* (London, 1890), pp. 4–5.

[70] Renet, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

[71] J. Corblet, *op. cit*, p. 628. In Michelet's *Histoire de France* there occurs a reference to a church which is said to have been built by Becket. (Paris, 1881, II, 355.) He does not give any further details. He may refer to one of the traditions concerning the church at St. Lô (see above, p. 212).

[72] M. Guizot, *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France* (Paris, 1825), VII, 140–1.

[73] "Saint Thomas de Cantorbéry et une Tradition à Lisieux," *Revue de la Normandie*, IX (1869), 721–743.

There is a tradition that Becket lived in the city of Lyons for a while during his exile.[75] Near Saint-Just-des-Marais there is a place formerly called "Maison Saint-Thomas" and now known as "Clos Saint Thomas." Tradition affirms that Becket spent some time there.[76] He is said to have passed through Tillet, and a stone is pointed out on which he rested his head.[77] Abbeville and St. Riquier likewise, according to tradition, enjoyed his presence.[78]

Owing to the fact that Becket passed through Flanders in going to and from England, that section is rich in traditions concerning him. J. A. Giles reports a tradition as still existing among the clergy of French Flanders that Becket was six feet two inches in height.[79] A long list of places which the archbishop is supposed to have visited is given by the Abbé Destombes.[80] A chronicle manuscript of the abbey of Bourbourg tells of the visit of Becket to that abbey, where he was given a splendid reception by the abbess, Madame Clarisse de Somerighem.[81] Another chronicle, in a volume which ends in 1581, speaks of the visit of St. Thomas, and says that he left there a chalice of gold which was still to be seen at the time of writing.[82] Martène and Durand speak of seeing at the abbey of Bourbourg a gold chalice of St. Thomas.[83] A seventeenth-century canon reaffirms the tradition, and gives a description of the chalice.[84] Coussemaker speaks of a chalice at Bourbourg, which he believes to be the one left by Becket as a token of his appreciation of the hospitality extended to him at that place.[85]

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[74] For a defense of the tradition, see Gaston Le Hardy, "Compte-rendu d'une Brochure de M. l'abbé Tapin sur Saint Thomas de Cantorbéry," *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, VI (1870–3), 68–72.

[75] A. F. Ozanam, *Deux Chanceliers d'Angleterre* (2nd ed., Paris, 1859), tome 7, Melanges, 1, 474–5.

[76] Renet, *op. cit.*, pp. 97–8.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] M. Darsy, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

[79] *The Life and Letters of Thomas à Becket* (London, 1846), I, 50, note 1.

[80] *Op. cit.*, IV, 329–33.

At the monastery of Anchin, Becket is supposed to have left several relics: a chasuble, a dalmatic, a tunicle, and a green cope. At Marchiennes he gave a pallium and a cross adorned with many precious stones.[86] There is now preserved in the Public Library at Douai, No. 94, a MS. Pontifical, once in the possession of Marchiennes, on the first page of which a librarian of Marchiennes had written, "Pontificale hoc ad usum ecclesiarum anglicarum recepisse nos à S. Thoma Cantuariensi traditione constanti habemus." But L'Huillier, after a close examination of the manuscript, decides that it is certain that it never belonged to Thomas of Canterbury.[87]

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[81] J. J. Carlier, "Souvenirs de Saint-Thomas de Cantorbéry," *Annales du Comité Flamand de France*, VII (1863–1864), 327–8. Carlier places this visit in 1163, when Becket was on his way to the Council of Tours, but Destombes associates it with his flight from England. An idea of the reliability of Destombes may be gained from the following sentence: "Les calculs du roi d'Angleterre étaient trompés; aussi, ne trouvant point dans le prélat la facile condescendance qu'il en attendait, *il le condamna à l'exil.*" (Italics mine.) *Op cit.*, p. 329.

[82] J. J. Carlier, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

[83] *Voyage Littéraire de deux religieux Benedictines de la Congregation de Saint Maur* (Paris, 1724), I², p. 187.

[84] Le R. P. Boussingault, *La guyde universelle de tous les Pays-bas* (Paris, 1672), p. 279.

[85] "Notice sur les Archives de l'Abbaye de Bourbourg," *Annales du Comité Flamand de France* (1859), IV, 260.

[86] Martène and Durand, *op. cit.*, II, 97.

[87] *Saint Thomas de Cantorbéry* (Paris, 1892), II, 553–4. L'Huillier's conclusion is that owing to numerous omissions in the manuscript, it could never have been used by St. Thomas nor by anyone else; and that it never even belonged to the church at Canterbury, for not one of the archbishop saints are mentioned, whereas one finds the names of St. Swithun and St. Adelwold, both bishops of Winchester, as well as that of St. Byrin, whose relics had been transferred to Winchester. St. Thomas is not mentioned in any of the litanies;

The memory of Becket is preserved at Arras in several ways. At the Abbey of Saint Vaast there was kept for a long time a chalice of pure gold, which the saint was said to have used. In St. Anthony's there was an inscription, "Icy Saint Thomas célébra messe certainement." In the church of St. Jean-Baptiste he is supposed to have celebrated the holy Sacrifice.[88] The Benedictines, Martène and Durand, upon visiting Arras, were shown the chalice, but their belief in the authenticity of the tradition connected with it seems to have been somewhat less than whole-hearted. Also in Arras near the Church of Saint Magdelene there exists even today a fountain called the Fountain of St. Thomas, the water of which was regarded as a remedy for fever.[89]

At the abbey of Dommartin the archbishop is said to have left as souvenirs a beautiful cross, a chasuble, and some dalmatics.[90] At Dixmude a chasuble and chalice still exist, which are supposed to have been used by the martyr. At Auchy-les-Moines near Hesdin, he was thought to have said Mass in a little chapel of the abbey; and at Blangy, a gold ring in which a large topaz was set, served as a souvenir of the saint.[91]

At La Motte au Bois there was an altar dedicated to Becket, in which some of his relics were enclosed, but there seems no other indication of his presence there. Carlier recounts an interesting legend connected with the supposed visit of the archbishop. According to the popular tradition, the locality was at one time infested by poisonous adders, and the clerics who officiated at the chapel of La Motte au Bois went to the Abbey of Saint-Bertin at Saint-Omer, and procured there a relic of St. Thomas which they conveyed with great solemnity through

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so the book must have been written before his martyrdom. L'Huillier is of the opinion that it is a copy, executed in the latter half of the twelfth century, which reproduces one of the oldest monastic pontificals. Its origin is to be sought in some monastery situated near Winchester.

[88] J. J. Carlier, *op. cit.*, p. 334, referring to Comte d'Hericourt, in *Bulletin des antiquaires de la Morinie*, 1852, p. 108.

[89] A. L'Huillier, *op. cit.*, I, p. 451.

[90] J. Corblet, *op. cit.*, IV, 638, referring to Jean Buzelin, *Annal. gallo-flandriae*, II, 244.

[91] L'Huillier, *op. cit.*, p. 451. John Morris, *The Life and Martyrdom of Saint Thomas Becket* (2nd ed., London and New York, 1885), II, 564.

all parts of the district. At once the plague ceased, and wagons were engaged for several days in hauling away the dead bodies of the reptiles, to the great joy of the inhabitants. This event is supposed to have occurred in June, 1737.[92]

According to Victor Derode, Rue d'Angleterre in Lille owes its name to the fact that St. Thomas lodged for a time in a house on that street.[93] On the wall of the house which now occupies the site, there appears this inscription:

Sancto Thomae
Canturbiensis
Hujus aedis quondam
Hospiti sit
Laus, Honor, et Gloria.

It was generally believed that Becket had imparted to the waters of a well at this house an efficacy for the healing of fever and other maladies. This belief, says Derode, has been preserved to the present, owing to the many cures which have been attributed to the miraculous fountain.

In the church of Beauchamp-en-Weppes a wooden drinking cup is preserved, which is said to have been given to the saint by a peasant to quench his thirst. On a farm formerly owned by the comte de La Grandville is found the well from which Becket is said to have drunk. By the side of the well there has been erected a small chapel, which has been the goal of many pilgrimages.[94]

Tournai likewise has many relics and traditions of Thomas. Both the monastery of Saint-Nicolas-des-Près and the abbey of Saint-Medard claimed the honor of having had Becket as a guest.[95] In the Cathedral of Tournay the windows depicted the scene of his martyrdom: a red chasuble, first given to St. Medard, was kept for a time in the cathedral, but is now in the possession of the Jesuit fathers of the same village. An altar was erected in the cathedral in honor of Becket in 1171, one year before his canonization.[96]

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[92] *Registre de la paroisse de la Motte au Bois.*—"Devotions populaires des flamands de France" par R. de Bertrand. *Annales du comité flamand*, 1855, II, 140. Quoted in J. J. Carlier, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

[93] *Histoire de Lille* (Paris, 1848), I, 93.

[94] J. J. Carlier, *op. cit.*, pp. 371–2. L'Huillier, *loc. cit.*

[95] J. J. Carlier, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

All the recent writers who have treated the subject of Becket's supposed visits in Flanders, have been compelled to reject all or part of the traditions. Even John Morris remarks, "It is not easy to see when such visits can have taken place."[97] The following conclusions are based, in the main, upon the evidence collected by L'Huillier.[98] There are only three occasions on which the Archbishop passed through Flanders: in 1163, when he was on the way to the Council of Tours; when he fled from Northampton; and when he was returning to Canterbury. On the first occasion Herbert says that from Gravelines Becket went to Tours through Normandy and Maine, keeping on territory of the King of England all the way.[99] It would hardly be possible, then, for him to make excursions to places like Lille, Arras, and Tournai. On the second occasion the route of Becket can be definitely traced from Gravelines to Clairmarais, St. Bertin, and finally Soissons. On the last journey the prelate was eager to reach the coast, and there would not have been time for so many side trips. It is obvious, too, that while he was in exile and dependent upon the hospitality that was shown him, he would not be in a position to give costly souvenirs.

Although L'Huillier rejects the accounts of visits of Thomas to villages and monasteries in Flanders, he does not deny the authenticity of some of the relics. He suggests that perhaps several of the relics were originally goods stolen by the murderers when they pillaged the church at Canterbury. Afterwards the murderers, repenting, may have distributed the articles among churches, from which they eventually came into the possession of religious houses in Flanders.[100] The fountains and wells which bear the name of Thomas and are supposed to have received miraculous properties from him may owe their association with the archbishop to the fact that some pilgrim from Canterbury poured into the water an ampulla containing a few drops of the Martyr's blood. Such an occurrence might be sufficient to give rise to a story that Becket actually had visited these places.

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[96] John Morris, *loc. cit.*
[97] *Op. cit.*, II, 564.
[98] *Op. cit.*, II, 551–3.
[99] *Materials*, III, 253–4.
[100] *Op. cit.*, II, 549–50.

Italy likewise preserves several interesting but unsupportable traditions concerning Becket. He is supposed to have visited Rome in order to make his appeal to the pope, and to have remained for some time in that city. According to one legend, the Archbishop built a Chapel of the Holy Trinity in Rome,[101] and later on the same spot the English College was erected; according to another, the church was dedicated to him after his martyrdom because he had lived there.[102] Flechier refers to Becket's being in Rome, "errant tantôt sur les bords du Tibre, tantôt vers ceux de la Seine."[103] But there is no evidence that Becket was in Rome after he became archbishop, or indeed, in any part of Italy. When he visited Alexander III, the Pope himself was in exile at Sens.[104] It seems probable that this visit is responsible for the tradition. People lost sight of the fact that the pope was not then in Rome, and inferred that Becket went to the regular seat of the papal court.

According to a history of Anagni by De Magistris, Becket came to that city in 1169, while Alexander III was living there.[105] During his stay he is said to have celebrated Mass regularly in the cathedral, where an altar was later erected to him in the crypt.[106] That such a journey could have taken place without being mentioned in the biographies of Thomas or in the correspondence connected with him, is, of course, impossible. L'Huillier is of the opinion that the tradition has arisen through a confusion of Thomas of Canterbury with Thomas de Canteloup, who went to the pontifical court during his exile, and who even died in Italy.[107]

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[101] John Stow, *Annales* (Londini, 1631), p. 335.

[102] W. J. D. Croke, "The National English Institutions in Rome during the Fourteenth Century," *Dublin Review*, CXXXIV (April 1904), p. 277. Barbier de Montault, *L'Année Liturgique à Rome* (Rome, 1870) p. 106, also gives the latter tradition.

[103] Esprit Fléchier, *Panégyriques et Autres Sermons* (Paris, 1721), II, 85.

[104] Above, p. 17.

[105] Alessandro De Magistris, *Istoria della Citta e S. Basilica Cattedrale d'Anagni* (Rome, 1749), p. 107.

[106] See also John Morris, *op. cit.*, II, 511, and J. J. Carlier, *op. cit*, p. 355.

A seventeenth-century life of Becket in Italian refers to a fountain which Thomas is supposed to have caused to spring up spontaneously on one of his visits to Rome. This fountain was in the possession of the Signori Morselli of Vigerano, who inscribed the following verses celebrating their devotion to St. Mark and St. Thomas of Canterbury, on the city insignia, which it was their privilege to carry in procession on St. Mark's Day:

> Clarorumque tribus, Morsellorumque propago
> Marcola, quae gemino nitet illustrata decore.
> Nam licet Huic soli, cim Marci festa geruntur,
> Vexillum patriae populo praeferre precanti,
> Haec etiam in terris Sanctorum munere gaudet;
> Nam sibi conspicuum Thomas pater ille beatus
> Praesul arenosis fontem impetravit in arvis.[108]

In a chapel in Florence dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket are two monuments erected to Tommaso and Ruggieri Minerbetti, whose family claimed kinship with the archbishop of Canterbury.[109] Perhaps the most distinguished member of this family was F. Andrea Minerbetti, a Knight Commander of the Order of St. John at Florence, who is mentioned by Cola.[110] In the Minerbetti family, Cola tells us, the baptismal name of Becket was always preserved, and the festival of the Saint was kept with great solemnity. There are two legends to account for the connection of the family with Becket. According to one, some of the archbishop's relatives were so cruelly persecuted in England that they had to flee, and about the end of the twelfth century settled at Lucca, whence they later came to Florence. The name *Minerbetti* is supposed to be a corruption of *Becket*.[111] According to the other legend, after the death of

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[107] *Op. cit.*, II, 550.

[108] Giovanni Battista Cola, *Vita di S. Tomaso, Arcivescovo di Cantuaria* (Lucca, 1696), pp. 180–1.

[109] Susan and Joanna Horner, *Walks in Florence* (London, 1873), II, 211.

[110] See John Morris, *op. cit.*, II, 509.

[111] S. and J. Horner, *loc. cit.*

St. Thomas of Canterbury, a younger brother ran away from England and settled at Pisa. He called himself "Becket Minor," and the name was eventually transformed in Minabekti, or Minerbetti.[112] The unauthentic nature of the latter tradition is evident, for Becket did not have a younger broher. We know nothing of any brother at all, though we have the names of three sisters: Mary, probably the youngest, who became a nun; Rohesia or Roesa; and Agnes, who married Thomas, son of Theobald of Helles.[113] Robertson mentions a nephew of the archbishop, Ralph, who was imprisoned for his misdeeds and who, he thinks, might have removed to Italy.[114] That *Minerbetti* is a corruption of *Becket* is doubtful enough, but that it was a result of a man's calling himself *Becket Minor* is quite beyond belief. Another Italian tradition says that the sons of Rohesia lived for a time at Rome, where there was a family of the name of Becket in the time of Innocent III. Both of the sons died at Verona, where they were buried. Whether the tradition is authentic or not, there exist at Verona a Church of Saint Thomas of Canterbury and a relic of the martyr.[115]

Several other Italian families claimed relationship with Thomas Becket. Bucelinus, writing in 1665, mentions among those who had assisted him in compiling his "Notitia Germaniae," a certain "Jerome Fabriani, Baron de Becket, of the family of St. Thomas of Canterbury."[116] In the Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury at Verona, there is the tomb of Giovan' Battista Becket, who is said in the inscription to be of the Archbishop's family.[117] At Fabriano, whence the Beckets removed who had lived at Rome, there were born in the fourteenth century, two brothers, Jean and Pierre Becket, who entered the monastery of the Hermits of St. Augustin, filled several important offices in their order, and died about 1425. Miracles became associated with their sepulchre, and in 1835 Pope Gregory recognized and confirmed the cult which had grown up about them.[118] Cola mentions the Signori Becchetti of Piacenza, Fabriano, Verona, Bercetto in the duchy of Parma, Sacca in Sicily, and elsewhere, as related to the saint.[119]

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[112] *Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, IX (1860), 63.

[113] See J. C. Robertson, *Becket* (London, 1859), pp. 353–4, and the references there cited.

[114] "Becket Memoranda: On the Kindred of Archbishop Becket," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, X (1876), 24–25.

[115] L'Huillier, *op. cit.*, II, 569.

[116] J. C. Robertson, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, X, 24.

[117] *Ibid.*, referring to Murray's *Handbook for North Italy* (ed. 1854), p. 257; see also G. H. F. Vane, in *Notes and Queries*, 8th series, VII, 57, and A. J. C. Hare, *Cities of Northern Italy* (1876), I, 292.

In Ireland likewise there was a family for whom relationship with Becket was claimed. Edmund Campion in his *Historie of Ireland* written in 1571 says of one of the Butlers, Earls of Ormond,

> His very surname is Becket, who was advanced by Henry the Second in recompense of the injury done to St. Thomas of Canterbury their kinsman.[120]

Morris says that it is supposed that these Butlers of Ormond were descended from Agnes, and the relationship is mentioned in a petition to Parliament in 1454.[121]

Relics of Becket have been scattered all over Europe. An interesting tradition says that the royal abbey of Royaumont was glorified in the fifteenth century by possessing the head of the martyr.

> Le chef de saint Thomas, renfermé dans une riche châsse, fut donné par saint Louis à l'abbaye de Royaumont qu'il fonda dans le diocèse de Beauvais.[122]

The tradition will not, of course, bear investigation, but it is a fair example of some of the extravagant claims that have been made. John Morris mentions relics which exist in St. Mary Major's at Rome, and cites Baronius, who says that the papal legates brought back with them a portion of his brain which had been scattered on the pavement, and his tunic stained with blood, and adds that these things were placed in the church.[123]

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[18] L'Huillier, *loc. cit.*

[119] *Op. cit.*, p. 179.

[120] Ed. 1809, pp. 7–8 (Ware's *Ancient Irish Histories*, Vol. I, part 2).

[121] *Op. cit.*, II, 506.

[122] Felix Clement, *Histoire Génèrale de la Musique Religieuse depuis ses Origines jusqu'à nos Jours* (Paris, 1878), pp. 300–1.

[123] *Op. cit* , II, 514, referring to *Annales*, XII, 655.

Prior Benedict, when he was made Abbot of Peterborough in 1176, carried to his abbey two vases of the blood of St. Thomas and parts of his clothing. St. Augustine's received a portion of the martyr's blood, brain, and skull. Prior Geoffrey is said to have taken some relics with him to Rouen. At Windsor was supposed to be a portion of his blood. A bone of his arm was thought to be in the Church of St. Waldetrude at Mons; his miter and linen dipped in the blood at St. Bertin's at St. Omer.[124] L'Huillier says that the abbey of the Benedictines of Jouarre possessed the lower jaw of the martyr, a treasure which may still be observed there, though it has somewhat diminished in size.[125] He shows that some of the traditions about relics of Becket are without foundation. For example, the treasury of Notre Dame de Paris contains a pectoral cross, which Thomas is supposed to have been carrying at the moment of martyrdom. But the archbishop did not wear a cross except when engaged in sacred functions, and the accounts of the martyrdom show that it did not take place in the sanctuary.[126] The religious garments preserved at Lisieux as relics of St. Thomas of Canterbury have proved to be in reality those of St. Thomas of Canteloup, Bishop of Hereford.[127] Tradition naturally confused the two names.

Parts of his body, crosses, pieces of garments, knives and other articles used by Thomas, may be found all over England and France. If the relics which are supposed to be parts of his body were all authentic, there could be no question concerning the bones discovered in 1880 in Canterbury Cathedral. They could not possibly have been those of the great archbishop, for there would have been none left to discover in Canterbury!

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[124] All these details are taken from Morris, *loc. cit.*
[125] *Op. cit.*, II, 546.
[126] *Ibid.*, II, 548.
[127] *Ibid.*, II, 547.

## X

## POLITICAL PROPHECIES ATTRIBUTED TO BECKET

That Thomas Becket had received visions foretelling future events in his own life or in the lives of his contemporaries, his earliest biographers believed.[1] As his fame as a saint increased, he appeared frequently in the rôle of conventional prophet, to whom were attributed long and mysterious allegories supposed to deal with future political events. We find him associated as a prophet with Merlin, Chaucer,[2] Bede, Thomas of Ashedoune, John of Bridlington, Salomon, Mahomet of the Jewes, Mahomet of the panimes,[3] and others.

Bridlington gives the circumstances connected with a prophecy attributed to Thomas enumerating the six kings of England who should follow Henry II.[4]

> In the time of Henry, King of England, discord sprang up between the father the king and Henry, his firstborn crowned son. This dissension much displeased St. Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, especially since, when he had held the office of chancellor, he had adopted the young Henry as a son. One day, while he was sitting at meat, he discussed this matter with the clerks about him and lamented the discord, not fearing that revenge upon himself would follow the discord. When the cloth had been removed and the couches arranged after the meal, the saint inclined his head in his hands, and not long afterwards he was asleep, and those who were with him did not wish to arouse him. When at length he awakened, he found a small leaf of paper in his hand containing the following verse:
>
> H. patre submarcet post R. reget J, que relicto
> E. post H. rex fit, E post E. postea mira.
>
> After reading this, he sighed, and remained silent. Perceive how the Lord

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[1] See above, p. 99 ff.

[2] Add. MS. 24,663. See *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 1854–1875, II, 94–5.

[3] Ashmolean MS. 337. See W. H. Black, *A . . . Catalogue of the Manuscripts Bequeathed . . . by Elias Ashmole* (Oxford, 1845), pp. 227–81.

[4] *Gesta Edwardi de Carnavon, auctore Canonico Bridlingtoniensi*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. William Stubbs (Rolls Series; London, 1883), II, 93–4.

> visited this holy man and in His compassion revealed to him the future. For the writing contained a true and subtle prophecy. For while the father was still living, the crowned son died, and one after another the others succeeded to the throne. To this king (Edward III) indeed, it befalls that many wonders are done in his time.[5]

One of the most interesting political prophecies attributed to Becket is the so-called "Vision at Sens," written in Latin.[6]

> When I, Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, exile from England, fled into France, I came to Pope Alexander, who was then at Sens, that I might show to him the evil customs and abuses which the King of England had introduced against the church. One night, when I was in prayer in the Church of St. Columba, I prayed that the Queen of Virgins would give to the king of England and to his heirs purpose and will of amendment toward the church, and that Christ in His mercy would cause him to love the church with a fuller love. Immediately the Holy Virgin appeared to me, having in her bosom this golden eagle, and holding in her hand a little stone flask; and taking the eagle from her bosom, she shut the flask in it, placed the eagle with the flask in my hand, and spoke to me these words: "This is the unction with which the kings of England should be anointed, not those who now reign or will reign, because they are and will be wicked, and on account of their sins have lost and will lose much. But there shall be kings of England in the future who shall be anointed with this unction; they shall be kind and champions of the church. They shall recover in peace the land lost by their fathers, when they shall have the eagle with the flask. There shall be a king of England who, after he has been anointed with this unction, shall recover the land lost by his fathers, that is to say, Normandy and Aquitaine. This king shall be the greatest among kings,

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[5] The prophetic verse, but in a rather garbled form, is given under the heading, "Visio Sancti Thomae Martiris Cantuariensis archiepiscopi de Regibus Angliae," in the Minutiae appended to *Roberti de Avesbury Historia de Mirabilibus Gestis Edvardi III*, ed. Tho. Hearnius (Oxonii, 1720), p. 260. The initial of John is omitted, and the order of succession is confused.

[6] Printed in Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, CXC (1854), cols. 391–4, upon which the translation here given is based. There are many manuscripts. Royal MS. 12 C. XII, f. 16b; Royal XIII. E. IX. f. 27b; and Cotton MS. Titus D. VII, f. 28 present only slight variations from the printed version (G. F. Warner and J. P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections* (London, 1921), II, 28, 114). There is a longer version in Royal MS. XIII. E. IX, f. 94. Cf. Arundel 219; Arundel I. (Col. of Arms), f. 234d; Ashmolean MS. 1393, 52ab, 54ab; Add. MS. 24,663, f, 30b–31a; Harley MS. 495, f. 10; Lansdowne MS. 762, f. 6b; Cottonian MS. Cleop. B. 1, f. 182b; Cotton, Vespasian E. VII, f. 112; and Cotton, Claudius E. VIII. f. 1b.

> and he shall build many churches in the Holy Land, and put to flight all pagans from Babylon, and he shall build there many churches. And as often as the king shall carry the eagle in his bosom, he shall have victory over his enemies, and his kingdom shall at all times be increased. And you shall be a martyr." And then I asked the Holy Virgin to show me where I should preserve such a precious treasure. She said to me, "There is a man in this city named William, a monk of St. Cyprian of Poitiers, who has been unjustly expelled from his abbey by his abbot, and who is petitioning the pope to restore him to his abbey. Give him the eagle with the flask, that he may take it to the city of Poitiers; and in the Church of St. Gregory, near the Church of St. Hilary, let him hide it near the head of the church, toward the west, under a large stone. There it shall be found at a fitting time, and shall be the unction of the kings of England. The cause of the finding of this eagle shall be among the pagans." And all these things I gave him enclosed in a leaden vessel.

The account of the vision in the *Eulogium Historiarum*[7] presents one slight variation. "There shall be a king of England who first shall be anointed with this unction, who shall recover the land lost through his fathers, that is to say, Normandy and Aquitaine." Bouchet translates the prophecy in his *Annals of Aquitaine.*[8] He gives the name of the monk to whom it was entrusted as "Babilonius," and says that "the leader of the pagans shall be responsible for finding it." Buchon, in a note on Froissart, says that this oil was inexhaustible, like that brought by the Holy Spirit for the anointing of Clovis and his successors.[9] He remarks that the reformers would undoubtedly have broken the flask which contained it if the Holy Virgin had not come to take it away.

Versions of the finding of the prophecy differ somewhat. The manuscript used by John Morris says that "the above-written was accidentally found by my lord the King of England, on the vigil of St. Gregory, in the year of our Lord 1337, in an old chest."[10] According to Walsingham, the unction and the prophecy were brought to light while Henry, the first Duke of Lancaster, was fighting for the king across the sea.[11] A certain holy man found them by divine revelation, and gave them to Prince Edward (The Black Prince), son of King Edward III. He placed the unction, enclosed in a box, in the Tower of London. Weever quotes the belief that the prophecy was delivered to Henry, the first Duke of Lancaster, but does not mention the Black Prince.[12]

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[7] Ed. F. S. Haydon (Rolls Series, 1858), I, 406–7.

[8] John Webb, "Translation of a French Metrical History of the Deposition of King Richard the Second," *Archaeologia*, XX (1824), 266–7, quoting Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine*, p. III, c. IV.

[9] *Chroniques de Froissart*, ed. J. A. Buchon (Paris, 1826), XIV, 229, Note a.

[10] *The Life and Martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket* (2nd ed., London, 1885), II, 496.

The later history of the unction and the prophecy is found in Walsingham. In 1399 King Richard II unexpectedly found them and asked Thomas (Arundel), Archbishop of Canterbury, to reanoint him, but the latter refused, saying he ought not be anointed again. Richard carried the eagle and flask into Ireland, and afterwards delivered them to the archbishop at Chester. The archbishop kept the relics till the time of Henry IV, who was the first king anointed with the unction.[13]

Buchon has pointed out that the prophecy did not prove to be a true one.

> Henry IV fut le premier oint de la goutte contenue dans cette ampoulle. Il ne recouvra point l'Aquitaine parce qu'elle n'étoit pas perdue; il ne chassa point les payens de Babylone, parce qu'il n'alla point à Babylone et qu'au contraire les payens furent tellement florissants que peu de temps après il prirent Constantinople; et ses descendants au lieu d'être des bâtisseurs d'église et de monastères, et d'êtres obéissants à l'Église, rompirent avec elle et détruisirent tous les couvents.[14]

The only experience of Henry IV in the Holy Land was a journey to Jerusalem in 1391, eight years before he became king. Henry V reconquered Normandy, but his successes were certainly not peaceful accomplishments, and were limited to northern France. Furthermore, though he planned a Crusade, Henry V was just as devoid of adventures in the Holy Land as his father had been.

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[11] *Historia Anglicana,* ed. H. T. Riley (Rolls Series, London, 1863), II, 239–40.

[12] John Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (London, 1631), p. 200.

[13] *Loc. cit.*

[14] *Chroniques de Froissart,* ed. Buchon, XIV, 229, Note a.

The reference to Normandy and Aquitaine may be of some service in helping to date the prophecy. The unknown author would hardly have spoken of recovering these two provinces at a time when English control was unquestioned in either of them. Normandy, it will be remembered, was lost in 1204. There were two periods from the acquisition of Aquitaine in 1152 to its loss in 1451 when the English power was weakest there: between 1259 and 1337 the English frontier had been pushed back until only a small strip of land on the coast from the Charente to the Adour was left, and at the death of Edward III in 1377 all that remained to the English crown was Bordeaux and Bayonne. It is conceivable that an Englishman living in either of these periods might speak of "recovering Normandy and Aquitaine" as a desirable event. The latter period, however, is too late for the composition of the prophecy, for one manuscript, Royal 12C. XII, is dated circa 1320–1340.[15] The prophecy must have been written then, between 1259 and 1340, and inasmuch as there is mention of the finding of the prophecy in 1337, one might hazard the guess that it had not remained long undiscovered, but had been written shortly before that time.

Another prophecy, written in Latin and attributed to Becket, is usually entitled, "The Prophecy of the Lily, the Lion, and the Son of Man." It has been twice printed.[16] The following translation is based upon the text in Migne, which is somewhat fuller than the version printed in 1666. The heading of the prophecy suggests a connection with the Vision at Sens, "Prophetia Antiqua Circa Dictam Ampullam et Regibus Angliae," etc.

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[15] J. P. Gilson, *Catalogue of . . . Royal and King's Collections* (London, 1921), II, 29. Ward, *Catalogue of Romances* (London, 1883), I, 316, gives the date as "about A. D. 1340."

[16] *The Prophecie of Thomas Becket,* London 1666 (text and (translation); J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus,* CXC (1854), 354 (text only). There is also a translation in *A Most Learned and Eloquent Speech . . .* (London, 1722). There are many manuscripts: Ashmole 241, f. 202, 205b; Ashmole 423; 546; 1501; Cottonian MSS: Titus D. xix, f. 118; Cleopatra D. iii, f. 184; Claudius E. VIII. f. 1b and 23; Royal MSS. 12 C. XII, ff. 14–16b, and 13 E. IX. f. 27; Harley 1008, f. 81; Stowe 305, f. 259; Add. MS. 24,663, f. 17b–18a. Lilly's Paraphrase is found in Ashmole 241, f. 190–200b, 201b; Ashmole 371. A Commentary by Lilly, together with a translation of the prophecy, is in Ashmolean MS. 1501, pp. 1, 3–20. Another translation is in Harley 559, f. 2.

There is a prefatory note stating that the prohecy "was transscribed in the year 1407 at the feast of St. Matthew from a very old manuscript, called Fyshborne."

> From the creation of the world six thousand, five hundred and eighty-seven years,[17] the lily reigning in the famed part of the world shall be moved against the seed of the lion, and shall come into the land of the lion, and shall stand in the field among the thorns of his kingdom. Then the Son of Man shall come bearing three wild beasts in his arm, whose kingdom is in the land of the Moon. With a great army he shall cross the waters, and shall enter into the land of the lion, the latter desiring assistance because wild beasts of the region are tearing his skin. In that year the eagle shall come from the East, with his wings spread upon the sun, with a multitude of his young, to the aid of the Son of Man. In that year many camps shall be destroyed: great terror shall be in the world; and in some part of the land of the lion there shall be war between many kings. In that day there shall be a flood of blood, and the lily shall lose his crown, with which afterwards the Son of Man shall be crowned. During the following four years there shall be many battles in the world among Christians, and the greater part of the world shall be destroyed. The head of the world shall be bent down to the earth. But the Son of Man with the eagle shall prevail. Then there shall be peace over the whole face of the earth, and plentiful harvests. And the Son of Man, having received a wonderful sign, shall cross over into the land of promise, because the promises made by the First Cause then fulfilled shall endure.
>
> The eagle is the emperor; the Son of Man is our king; the lily is the king of France; the lion is the duke of Burgundy; and our king possesses the aforesaid eagle with the flask.

There are a few differences between this version and the one printed in 1666, chief of which is the reading, in the latter, "in terrae Lanae," "in the land of Wool," instead of "in terra Lunae."

It might be of interest to try to match the prophecy with the events of the latter part of the Hundred Years' War. John, Duke of Burgundy, after the Battle of Agincourt, became more and more favorable to the English; and according to the Treaty of Troyes King Charles VI bequeathed his crown to Henry V. But the emperor does not enter the historical scene at all, though he is mentioned in the prophecy; and the prophecy fails to take into account the death of Henry V. Furthermore, it makes no provision for the sudden turn of fortune against the English with the appearance of Joan of Arc.[18]

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[17] Mr. Gilson raises the query whether this date refers to 1338. (*Op. cit.*, p. 28.) The prophecy may have been written about that time (see next page), but there is no parallel between the prophecy and the events that occurred then.

The statement, "Our king possesses the aforesaid eagle with the flask," might lead one to infer that the prophecy was written in the time of Henry IV, the first one anointed with the unction that was supposed to have been miraculously delivered to Thomas Becket. But the passage might also refer to Edward III, if we may trust the manuscript which says that the flask and unction were discovered in 1337.[19] Inasmuch as MS. Royal 12 C. XII contains the prophecy, it must have been written before 1340.[20] It seems, like the Vision at Sens, to have been intended to encourage the English in the long and expensive wars in France.

The prophecy was rediscovered in the seventeenth century, and taken to apply to contemporary events. The manuscript was found by a Dr. Ailsworth, and sent by him to the University of Oxford, where it seems to have aroused considerable discussion.[21] The interpretation was omitted in the manuscript, and those who examined it were free to exercise their ingenuity in explaining it. The printed edition appeared with interpretative marginal notes, which a preface attributed to some of the masters, presidents, and principals of Oxford, mentioning especially a certain Dr. Tully.

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[18] A more elaborate interpretation is given in MS. Cotton, Cleopatra D. iii, f. 184. "The Lily may be interpreted as the old king of France; the lion, Flanders; the son of the lion, the duke of Flanders; the Son of Man, the king of England, bearing in his arm wild beasts, that is the leopard, as a defence; the eagle bearing arms the Emperor; the Sun, France; the head of the world, the pope." See Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, I, 318. This interpretation would neither detract from nor help the parallel. Flanders was Burgundian territory at this time; in fact, the Battle of Agincourt was fought in Flanders.

[19] See above, p. 227.

[20] See above, p. 229.

[21] *The Prophecie of Thomas Becket . . . Concerning the Wars between England, France, and Holland* (London, 1666), title page.

> By Lilium, they all unanimously conceive may be meant France, the Lillies being the Arms of it. By Leo, Holland, that being its arms. By Aquila, the Emperor of Germany, that being his. And, which is the chief thing, by Filius hominis, the King of England, being deciphered by Ferens feras in brachis, cujus regnum est in terra Lanae. By Caput Mundi, the Turk or Pope, as followeth in the Prophecie.[22]

Dr. Tully, in a letter, vigorously disclaimed responsibility for the interpretation, and characterized the work as "a late senseless and ridiculous pamphlet."[23] In one copy of the booklet, the preface bears the signature, "W. Littleton, Minister of the Gospel."[24] But the person responsible for the editing of the prophecy, and the revival of interest in it during the seventeenth century, seems to have been "William Lilly, student in astrology," as he signs himself in Ashmolean MS. 371.[25] He is the writer of a paraphrase and a commentary on the prophecy.[26]

It will be seen that the effort to apply the prophecy to the events of the War with Holland is not any more successful than the attempt to make it fit the reign of Henry V. Instead of England's aiding Holland against France, as the prophecy implies, England and France both fought against Holland. The Triple Alliance of 1668, it is true, involved the co-operation of England and Holland, and occasioned the withdrawal of Louis XIV from the Low Countries, but within two years England and France were in league again, and in 1672 were fighting against the Dutch. Furthermore, the tide of war was by no means so favorable to the English as the prophecy suggests, especially if one recalls De Ruyter's famous invasion of the Medway.

Another prophecy ascribed to Thomas Becket is written in English alliterative verse. It is found in two versions: one referred to as the Hatton version and the other as the Cambridge version, from the manuscripts in which they are found.[27] Both versions are fragments, and are complementary, though even when combined, they do not make a complete poem. Mr. Taylor thinks that perhaps a portion of the poem has been lost, or that possibly both the versions that we have are derived from some longer work.[28] Horstmann thinks that the poem is by the author of the Harley alliterative *Erkenwald*.[29]

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[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

[23] T(ully), T., *A Letter Written to a Friend in Wilts* (London, 1666), p. 3.

[24] The copy in the British Museum.

[25] See W. H. Black, *A . . . Catalogue of the Manuscripts Bequeathed . . by Elias Ashmole* (Oxford, 1845), pp. 287–8.

[26] See above, p. 229, note 16.

By combining the two versions, we can get a fairly connected story, though the beginning, even in the Hatton MS., is abrupt.

Thomas, journeying from Rome, passed through Pisa, where he found masons working on a tower of alabaster. Upon inspecting the work, the archbishop discovered a neglected image of the Virgin Mary. He called the master mason and gave him twenty marks to place the statue in a more prominent position. As he passed the image, he prayed Mary ever to be his friend. First the image bowed, and afterward the entire tower, an event which serves to explain the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Thomas proceeded to Basel, where he went into a church to celebrate Mass. When he reached for his missal, he discovered that he had left it at Rome. Suddenly a wonderful book fell upon the altar. When he was about to leave the church, some people reported that his bridle had been stolen, whereupon he bade them buy him another and prophesied the fall of Basel. After a two-days' journey, Thomas arrived at Avignon, where he knelt down and kissed the ground, and prophesied to the Earl of Warren that the place would at some time be the seat of the papacy. From Avignon he went to Poitiers, where he was entertained at the house of a burgess. Thomas inquired concerning a tower that was under construction, and was told that it was being built at the command of King Charles. Thomas then addressed the workmen, "There shall come from Britain two boars, who shall destroy both your tower and your town; one shall put the king to flight, and the other shall pasture himself in the choicest fields of the kingdom." The prophecy was reported to King Charles, who regretted that the building of the tower had been begun. Thomas prayed to the Virgin that the work might be carried forward, and as a result of his prayer the King commanded that the work should not be given up because of a Boar. Then the Virgin appeared to Becket and told him that the Boar should be born of French and English blood and should be matchless on earth. Afterward, Thomas bade the masons erect three crosses in the field. "At the first," said he, "the King of France shall lose his crown. At the second, archbishops, bishops, and other prelates shall die, and at the third the crown of France shall be killed in a battle of beardless boys." Young Warren made sport of the prophecy, but Thomas rebuked him saying, "This is true and no trifle that this book tells."[30]

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[27] MS. Hatton 56 f. 45a–46b, a fragment containing 102 lines, is written in the dialect of London, ca. 1450. See J. E. Wells, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English* (New Haven, 1926), p. 226. The first 28 lines are printed in Rupert Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York, 1911), p. 165. The same version is found in MS. Bodl. 4062, f. 45a (149 lines), which is printed by A. Brandl in *Archiv für das Neuren Sprachen und Litteraturen*, CII (1899), 354–7. The other version, which is considerably longer (256 lines), but which lacks the first 28 lines given in the Hatton version, is found in MS. Cbg. Univ. Lib. KK. I. 5. This is written in the Northern or Scottish dialect (1450–1500). It has been printed by J. R. Lumby in E. E. T. S., O. S., XLII, and by Joseph Stevenson in *The Scottish Metrical Romance of Lancelot du Lak*, Maitland Club, XLVIII (1839).

[28] *Op. cit.*, pp. 60–61.

[29] C. Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden*, Neue Folge (Heilbronn, 1881), p. 527.

The Hatton version ends at this point, but the Cambridge MS. continues:

A tusk of this Boar shall tear up the land, and he shall feast upon lords' bodies, perform wonders by the Seine, and burn Abbeville. Mountjoy, Caen, and Calais shall mourn because of this Boar; Hogge and Valois shall fall. Then the realm of the Boar shall be invaded by a king from the North, but the latter will be taken prisoner. The Boar will rest for a time, until his tusks are grown, but he shall be aroused by the capture of Berwick, and shall fight a battle at Boulogne. Here a bird with two beaks, followed by fifty thousand men, shall fight with the enemy. The Boar shall go to Paris, capture it, and then attack the two-beaked bird, and defeat him. Then the Boar shall fight in divers places, winning Milan, Lombardy, and the three crowns of the Bird. Finally, he will go to the Holy Land. After his departure, the land shall be ruled by women, or it may be desolated by a pestilence. Many wonders shall occur to bring the people to a knowledge of Christ. At this point, Sir Edmund Abingdon called attention to the lateness of the hour. An angel in blue then descended to Becket, and bade him bind up the book from which he had been reading. The book was carried into heaven, and Becket went on to Burgoyne.

A few differences may be observed where the versions overlap. The Hatton version at first mentions two Boars, whereas the

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[30] One is left in doubt whether the book which is mentioned as containing the prophecy is the one which fell upon the altar at Basel. Perhaps the reference to a book here is only a use of the conventional device to proclaim a prophecy.

Cambridge version speaks of only one. The accounts of Becket's stay at Poitiers likewise vary.

> According to the Cambridge version, when Becket inquired who was constructing the tower, he was told that King Charles had ordered it, but that the workmen had found a letter inscribed on a stone saying that a Boar from Britain should root up the tower and town. They sent for a Wise Man, who bade them cease work, and they did so. Upon receiving this explanation, Becket besought the Holy Virgin to tell him whether the Boar should come from Britain, and she confirmed the prophecy. Then he collected seven score of masons and completed the tower, that the Boar might have a place to rest.

The Boar refers, of course, to Edward III, and where a second Boar is mentioned, it refers to the Black Prince. Up to a certain point the prophecy approximates historical fact. In 1356 the city of Basel was practically destroyed by a great earthquake. Avignon was the residence of the popes from 1305 to 1377. In 1356 was fought the Battle of Poitiers, in which the Black Prince overcame a superior force of Frenchmen, and took prisoner King John and his young son, Philip.[31] Edward III, son of Edward II and Isabella of France, certainly occupied some of the choicest portions of the kindgom. Many of the French towns mentioned are associated with events of the Hundred Years' War: La Hogue was the starting-point of Edward's campaign of 1346; Caen resisted his advance, and many were killed on both sides; and Calais was captured (1347). The allusion to "a noynted kynge who shall come from the North" possibly refers to David II, king of Scotland, who invaded England in 1346, but was defeated and taken prisoner at the battle of Neville's Cross.[32] There was no battle of Berwick, though a treaty was signed there, which provided that the Scots should pay a ransom for their king.

But here the effort to find parallels in history for the events prophesied fails. There are two interpretations of the last portion of the prophecy. One is that of Mr. Taylor, who considers Edward III as still the leading figure, and the Bird with the Two Beaks as the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.[33] But no German emperor was actively engaged against Edward III. The other interpretation is that of Brandl, who thinks that this portion of the prophecy relates to a period sixty years later than the events treated in the earlier part, and refers to the Battle of Agincourt, Henry V's conquest of Normandy, and his entry into Paris (1420).[34] He takes the Bird with the Two Beaks to refer to the Dauphin, the future Charles VII. Though he fought against Henry V, there is no battle in which the Dauphin commanded fifty thousand men; he was only a boy of twelve at the time of the battle of Agincourt, and there was no battle of Boulogne. He was never destroyed by Henry V, though he was finally put to flight. Instead of going on a Crusade, Henry V died in 1422. In short, the only events in the latter part of the prophecy which find a historical parallel are the conquest of Normandy and the entry into Paris, and these are perhaps coincidences, or events which represent the ambition of an English writer for his national army.

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[31] It will be noticed that the prophecy is not entirely accurate even here. The town of Poitiers was not destroyed (the battle, in fact, took place six miles from it), and the king was not put to flight, or killed, but captured.

[32] *The Scottish Metrical Romance of Lancelot du Lak*, ed. Joseph Stevenson, Maitland Club, XLVIII (1839), p. 146, note q.

There are also elements of error and anachronism in the references to companions of Becket. According to Stevenson, there is no evidence that any members of the family of Warine, or Wake, accompanied the archbishop in exile, and Edmund de Abingdon was not even a contemporary.[35] The only mention of any of these people in the early lives of Becket seems to be of the Count of Warren, whom Thomas healed of a cataract of the eye.[36]

The prophecy, then, is a mixture of truth and error which suggests its being written in the midst of the events which it treats, following with some degree of fidelity the events of which the writer had a fair knowledge, and painting an imaginative picture of the future colored by his national sympathies. Probably the poem was written shortly after the Battle of Poitiers, as Mr. Taylor suggests,[37] for it is just after this point that the parallel with historical fact breaks down. If so, it may have been intended, as Brandl thinks,[38] to refresh confidence in the aging Edward III.[39]

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[33] *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York, 1911), pp. 61–62.
[34] *Archiv*, CII (1899), 352.
[35] *Op. cit.*, p. 135.
[36] *Materials*, I, 452.

Valueless as these prophecies are from a historical point of view, they are interesting because they reveal another side of the legendary Becket. The fact that they were attributed to St. Thomas in order to secure the belief of the people in them is, in itself, a testimony to the veneration in which his memory was held.

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[37] *Op. cit.*, p. 58.

[38] Hermann Paul, *Grundriss der Germanischen Philologie* (Strassburg, 1893) II, 661.

[39] Walsingham gives a curious prophecy which, though not political in character, may be mentioned here. (*Historia Anglicana*, ed. H. T. Riley, Rolls Series; London, 1863, I, 378.) It was predicted that for the death of St. Thomas vengeance should be wrought until the chapel of Westminster should be defiled by human blood. When, in 1378, Robert Haule, a prisoner who had escaped from the Tower and taken refuge in Westminster, was killed in the Abbey, and one of the servants of the church was also slain there, the prophecy was believed to have been fulfilled.

## XI

## MODERN LEGENDS

The sixteenth century brought with it a new opportunity for the creation of legend about the figure of the great medieval archbishop. The history of Henry VIII's part in the Reformation, and especially of his actions toward Thomas Becket, has been in general well known, but it has not always been easy to separate fact from fiction. Practically all the material that bears in any way upon this subject has been assembled by Dr. A. J. Mason, in his valuable book, *What Became of the Bones of St. Thomas?*[1] It remains to consider the portion of the material that has already been proved to be legend, and to offer an opinion, for whatever it may be worth, regarding the portion that is still in question. The subject divides itself into two phases: the posthumous trial of the archbishop, and the disposition of his bones at the time of Henry's religious reforms.

Although it is not likely, in the present state of scholarly opinion, that any advocates of the story of the mock trial will be found, the legend had a surprisingly strong foundation, and was very widely circulated. The first reference to it occurs in the Bull of Excommunication of December 17, 1538, directed against Henry VIII by Pope Paul III, in which he says that "the king had caused the said St. Thomas, for the greater scorn of religion, to be summoned to trial, and condemned for contumacy, and declared a traitor."[2] The language used in the beginning of the Proclamation of November 16, 1538, in which the king ordered that Becket should no longer be considered a saint, and that his images and pictures throughout the realm should be put down, happened to lend itself to some support of the legend of the mock trial:

> Forasmuch as it appeareth now clearly that Thomas Becket, sometime archbishop of Canterburie, stubbornly to withstand the wholesome laws

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[1] Cambridge, 1920.

[2] Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 132, translated from Wilkins, *Concilia*, III, 840.

> established against the enormities of the clergy, by the king's highness' most noble progenitor, King Henry the Second, for the common wealth, rest, and tranquillity of this realm; of his forward mind, fled the realm into France, . . .[3]

The statement of 1538–9, drawn up to justify the king's proceedings in matters of religion, contains similar wording:

> As for the shrine of Thomas Becket, sometime Archbishop of Canterbury, which they call St. Thomas, by approbation it appeareth clearly that his common legend is false, . . .[4]

Likewise, the language of Nicholas Harpsfield, Archdeacon of Canterbury under Queen Mary, in his *Life of Sir Thomas More*, might seem to imply some belief in the common legend of the time:

> Albeit we have of late (God illuminate our beetle blind hearts to see and repent our folly and impiety!) unshrined him and burned his holy bones, and not only unshrined and unsainted him, but have made him also (after so many hundred years) a traitor to the king that honoured him, . . .[5]

Nicholas Sander, in his work, *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani*, published in 1585, repeats the story, but adds nothing to the statement of the pope:

> But lest it should be thought that he (the king) raged only against those who live on the earth, and that he did not dare to attack those in heaven, St. Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, inscribed for three hundred years among the saints in heaven, and renowned for innumerable miracles, he forced to defend his cause on earth after so many centuries, and forbade him to be considered longer among the saints.[6]

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[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 142–3. This proclamation has been frequently reprinted; for instance, in Wilkins, *Concilia* (London, 1737), III, 847–8, and in Gilbert Burnet, *History of the Reformation*, ed. Nicholas Pocock (Oxford, 1865), VI, 221–2.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

[6] Translated from Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, pp. 164–5, quoting from the first edition of Sander's work (Cologne, 1585).

Sander's book was re-edited by Robert Persons, but according to Dr. Mason, though the passage was enlarged, it added nothing about the summons of the saint to trial.[7] Girolamo Pollini, *L'historia ecclesiastica della Rivoluzion d'Inghilterra* (Rome, 1594), follows Persons, but makes no contribution to the story.[8]

It is in Chrysostomo Henriquez, *Phoenix Reviviscens* (Brussels, 1626), that the full development of the legend is found. He gives the king's citation of St. Thomas and the later sentence upon him. If we trust Wilkins' quotation from Henriquez, he places the blame for the citation upon the advice of Thomas Cromwell.[9] The summons is given as follows:

> Henry, by the grace of God, king of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, and supreme head of the church of England. By these presents we cite and call to our Supreme Council, thee, Thomas, once archbishop of Canterbury, to plead concerning the cause of your death, concerning the scandals which you committed against the kings, our predecessors, and the injustice with which you have arrogated to yourself the name of martyr, because it was as a rebel[10] against the authority of your king and lord that you underwent death, rather than as a defender of the Catholic faith: though without examination by his laws, to which you opposed yourself; and to be supreme judge in ecclesiastical matters, as we now are. And because your offences are against the royal power, which we hold to-day, we cite you to hear sentence. And if you do not appear, we shall proceed judicially, as the laws of our kings prescribe. Dated London, 24 April, 1536.[11]

This summons has been torn to pieces by scholars, and its unauthenticity clearly established. Henry did not take the title "Rex Hiberniae" until 1541, and official papers are never dated from London, but from some locality in London, such as Westminster, St. James's, or The Tower.[12]

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[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 166.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] "But Chrysost. Henriquez, in a book, entitled, 'Phoenix Reviviscens,' affirms, 'quod Thomas Crumwellius Henrico auctor fuit, ut S. Thomae B. in concilio litem intentaret, ob mala quae vivens fecerat contra Angliae regnum, et regem Henricum ejus nominis secundum; . . .' " *Concilia*, III, 835. Wilkins, however, is not always to be trusted. See below, p. 242, and Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

[10] Literally, "as rebellious and contumacious."

[11] Translated from Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

Henriquez then describes the trial:

> Henry ordered this ill-advised citation of the holy man to be proclaimed at the sepulchre by a public announcer, and the evidence of the announcement to be written. And thirty days after this declaration against the saint had been read, an advocate having been given to him to plead his cause as the king wished, and by the methods of procedure which the king desired, he assumed the action of Henry II, and the attempt was made to prove that those old laws were just, that he who opposed himself to them was a rebel and a traitor, and that they who had killed the saint were fulfilling the duty of faithful and good agents, defenders of the king and of the honor and authority of their lord. Because of all these things this cruel sentence was passed upon St. Thomas, which God permitted that the injustice of this monster and the deed of such great wickedness might more clearly appear, and that the memory of St. Thomas should be renewed in his second martyrdom. The tenor of this sentence, as Hilliard records it, is as follows:
>
> "Henry, by the grace of God, king of England, France, and Ireland, supreme head of the Church of England, etc. The case of Thomas, once Archbishop of Canterbury, having been considered: and the fact that, when he was summoned before our supreme council, no one appeared by the time of the termination of the declaration, to plead his cause, and that counsel assigned to him alleged nothing to refute and reject the crime of rebellion, contumacy, lese majesty, and treason to his king, so that he had to flee the punishment due him; and also sufficient proof having been seen of all the things wherewith he was accused, that when he was living he disturbed our predecessors, that his crimes were the cause of his death, that he did not die because of the honor of God and the church, and that his superiority belonged to the kings of the realm, and not to the Roman bishop, therefore he sustained the judgment of our crown. And it has appeared also that people hold him to be worthy of veneration as a martyr, because they deify those who seek death in defence of the authority of the Roman church. Wherefore, that such crimes may be published, and ignorant men learn their error, and the abuses introduced in his time be abolished, we judge and decree that said Thomas, once archbishop of Canterbury, shall from this time not be held as a saint, nor named a martyr, nor shall be be counted among the righteous; his name and his images shall

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[12] On these matters, see *Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VIII*, arranged by James Gairdner, XIII, part II, p. 49; Dean Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* (2nd American ed.), p. 291, note 1; and Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

be removed from the temples, nor shall be be named in the missals and books of prayer, and we declare him to have committed the crime of lese majesty, treason, perjury, and rebellion. And because of this we order his bones to be removed from their sepulchre and publicly burned, that from the punishment of the dead the living may learn to respect our laws, and not oppose our authority. The gold, the silver, the precious stones, and other gifts, which simple men once offered at his sepulchre because they believed him a saint—his own property, as it were—we confiscate to our crown, as the laws and customs of his king direct, and we forbid, under penalty of death and confiscation of goods, any one of our subjects from this day to name him saint, or recite prayers to him, or to promote his memory directly or indirectly, for such shall be considered conspirators against the person of the king, or abettors of conspirators. And that no one may pretend ignorance of this our edict, we order that the same shall be proclaimed in our city of London, Canterbury, and others of our kingdom. Dated London, the eleventh day of June, 1538. By the King in his Council."[13]

Is Henriquez to be accused, then, of the manufacture of an elaborate sentence to fit the outlines of a story that had come to him? It is impossible to say. In the preparation of his own work he had Pollini before him, but Pollini merely translates the statement of Sander as re-edited by Persons, concerning the trial.[14] Henriquez mentions Richard Hilliard as his authority for the terms of the king's sentence upon St. Thomas, but the documents were not in the work of Hilliard in the Arundel MS. examined by Dr. Mason.[15] Whether the sentence is the invention of Henriquez or of someone who added to some manuscript of Hilliard, or whether Henriquez was wrong in his citation of the work of Hilliard, does not appear.

David Wilkins, in his *Concilia*,[16] which has been the chief source for the story in later times, gives extracts from Sander, Pollini, and Henriquez, sometimes without making his authorities clear.[17] He quotes both the summons and the sentence, and changes the date of the former to 1538, probably to bring it into conformity with the time of the proclamation issued by Henry.

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[13] Translated from Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–8.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[16] *Concilia Magnae Brtianniae et Hiberniae* (Londini, 1737), III, 835–6.

[17] He gives the impression, for instance, that the official sentence is borrowed from Pollini, whereas it comes from Henriquez. See Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

Later historians and biographers have usually repeated the story of the mock trial. Rivadeneira's *Lives of Saints* reflects both the Pope's bull and the account in Henriquez.[18] The historian Lingard treats the matter humorously. After speaking of the citation, he says,

> The interval of thirty days allowed by the canon law was suffered to elapse: still the saint neglected to quit the tomb in which he had reposed for two centuries and a half: and judgment would have been given him for default, had not the king of his special grace assigned him a council.[19]

Lord Campbell retells the whole story from Henriquez.[20] The first inclination to throw any doubt upon the story seems to occur in Todd's *Life of Cranmer.*[21] Since then most writers have felt with Dean Milman,[22] that it was "an elaborate hoax of the seventeenth century."[23]

It may throw some light upon the origin of the legend of the mock trial to recall that trials of the dead were sometimes actually held by authority of officials of the Roman church. In 1557, the bodies of Martin Bucer and Paul Fagius were exhumed, and after a mock trial, were burned on Market Hill in Cambridge.[24] The case of Wycliffe is not quite parallel, though at the Council of Constance (1415), after a committee had investigated his teachings, he was denounced as a heretic, his writings were ordered to be burned, and "his bones to be dug up and cast out of consecrated ground, provided they could be identified from those of Christians buried near."[25] Trials of the dead were sometimes used at Rome to determine the spiritual status of people who had been popularly acclaimed as saints.[26] As Dean Milman suggests, the whole procedure attributed to Henry VIII seems to have been a misapplication of Roman ideas to England.[27]

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[18] Trans. of W. P(etre), 2nd ed. (1730), II, 582–3.

[19] John Lingard, *A History of England* (2nd ed., London, 1823), p. 359.

[20] *Lives of the Lord Chancellors* (8th ed., Jersey City, 1880), I, 95. This work was first published in 1845–7.

[21] H. J. Todd, *The Life of Archbishop Cranmer* (London, 1831), I, 241–5.

[22] H. S. Milman, "The Vanished Memorials of St. Thomas of Canterbury," *Archaeologia*, LIII (1892), Part I, 218.

[23] It is little short of astonishing to find Dean Hutton even so tolerant of the legend as to say, "In September, 1538, came the destruction by order of Thomas Cromwell, Vicar-General for the king, possibly after a sort of mock trial of the long-buried saint." *Thomas Becket* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 283.

[24] *Dictionary of National Biography*, article "Martin Bucer," referring to *Scripta Anglicana*, 915–35. One edition of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (revised by W. Bramley-Moore; London, n.d., p. 507 note) gives an elaborate account of the citation, judgment, and burning of the bodies. H. B. Workman, *John Wyclif* (Oxford, 1926), p. 319, refers to the *Historia de accusatione, condemnationeex, humatione, atque combustione Buceri et Fagii*, Eng. Trans. (1562).

As to the disposition of the bones of the former archbishop at the time of the destruction of the shrine and the confiscation of the treasure, there have been two stories: one was that the agents of the king had burned the bones; the other was that they had been buried. There is necessity here for careful consideration of the evidence, to determine which story is true, and which may be considered as legend. As in the case of the trial, the earliest statement about the burning of the bones comes from Rome. On October 25, 1538, after the news of the unshrinement in the preceding month, the pope

> signified the new cruelty and impiety of the English king, who had ordered the body of the blessed Thomas of Canterbury to be burned and the ashes to be scattered and given to the winds, the shrine being at the same time plundered, and deputed certain cardinals to advise thereon.[28]

Then in December, apparently after the report of the cardinals had been submitted, the Pope's Bull of Excommunication was was issued, containing the following statement:

> . . . for whereas the bones of St. Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, because of the innumerable miracles wrought at them by Almighty God, were kept with the utmost reverence in the said realm of England in the city of Canterbury in an ark of gold, after the king had caused the said St. Thomas,

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[25] H. B. Workman, *op. cit.*, pp. 319–20; Lewis Sergeant, *John Wyclif* (New York, 1893), pp. 350–1; John Lewis, *History of the Life and Sufferings of . . . John Wyclif* (Oxford, 1820). These parallels to the legendary trial of Becket are suggested by H. J. Todd, *op. cit.*, I, 244–5.

[26] H. S. Milman, *loc. cit.*

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 220, quoting from *Ann. Eccl. Raynaldi contin. Baronii* (1755), XIII, 494.

> for the greater scorn of religion, to be summoned to trial, and condemned for contumacy, and declared a traitor, he has commanded these bones to be exhumed and burned, and the ashes scattered to the wind, . . .[29]

Cardinal Pole, who, as Dr. Mason says, is hardly to be considered an independent authority, makes a statement even more emphatic than that in the pope's bull, for the wording leaves no doubt that the writer believed the commands of Henry had been carried out:

> But that afterwards he should pluck from it the bones of a man who had died so many centuries before him (to say no more than this for the present) should cast them into the fire, and when they were reduced to ashes should then scatter them in despite to the wind, has anyone ever read of such an example of barbarity? . . .[30]

Dr. Mason points out that Castelnau wrote to Montmorency that the pope's nuncio in Spain desired vengeance upon Henry for his treatment of the relics of St. Edward the Confessor and St. Thomas of Canterbury.[31] Likewise, Sir Thomas Wyatt, then ambassador in Spain, referred to the offence given by "the burning the saint's bones."[32] A Spanish duke visiting Canterbury in 1543–4 reported the rumor that the bones had been burnt.[33] The statement of Johannes Sleidanus, the early German Protestant historian of the Reformation, has peculiar interest because of the general impartiality of his work, and yet doubtless he would have felt that the pope's bull was sufficient authority for the theory of the burning of the bones, or he may have been convinced by the rumors he heard on the Continent or even in London. He says,

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[29] Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 134, quoted from *Epistolarum Reginaldi Poli Collectio* (Brixiae, 1744, I, 102).

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 137. See *Letters and Papers . . . of the Reign of Henry VIII*, arranged by James Gairdner (London, 1893), XIII, Part II, 427.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

[33] "In it are preserved the relics of the blessed St. Thomas, Archbishop of this city, which the present king of England, . . . caused to be removed, and, as it is affirmed, burnt, under the pretext that the people venerated as a Saint a man who had no pretensions to that title, or for other bad purposes, arising out of the false opinions he holds." Frederic Madden, "Narrative of the Visit of the Duke de Najera to England, in the Year 1543–4; written by his Secretary, Pedro de Gante," *Archaeologia*, XXIII (1831), 350.

> Thomas of Canterbury was for some centuries held in great veneration by the English, and his body was enclosed in a shrine adorned with gold and jewels above measure. King Henry took him out this year (1538) and burnt the relics of his body.[34]

Nicholas Harpsfield, in his *Life of Sir Thomas More*, says, speaking of Thomas, "Albeit we have of late . . . unshrined him and burned his holy bones, . . ."[35] The direction of Harpsfield's sympathies may be judged from the fact that he tells the same story, this time with reference to Sleidanus, in a book entitled, *Six Dialogues against Opposers of the Supreme Pontificate, the Monastic Life, Saints, and Sacred Images, and against False Martyrs*.[36] The story appears also in the *Tres Thomae* of Thomas Stapleton.[37]

The English chronicles of the time record the belief that the bones were burned. None of the chronicles, it seems, give evidence at first hand. John Stow was only a boy of thirteen at the time of the destruction of the Canterbury shrine; in his *Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles* (1565) he cites Sleidan as authority for the statement that all shrines were taken away.[38] Here he does not specifically mention the shrine of St. Thomas, but in the *Chronicle* of 1580 he says:

> Saint Austins Abbey at Canterbury was suppressed, and the Shrine and goodes taken to the Kings treasurie, as also the shrine of Thomas Becket in the Priory of Christ Church, was likewise taken to the Kings use, and his bones scull and all, which was there found, with a peece broken out by the wound of his death, were all brent in the same Church by the Lord Cromwell.[39]

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[34] *De Statu Religionis* (1555), lib. XII, fol. 284, as quoted in John Morris, "The Relics of St. Thomas of Canterbury," *The Month*, LXII (1888), 319.

[35] Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 139. But see below, pp. 249–50.

[36] Antwerp, 1566. See H. S. Milman, *Archaeologia*, LIII (1), 225–6.

[37] Douay, 1588.

[38] H. S. Milman, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

[39] P. 1013 ff., as quoted by Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

In the *Annales*, published in 1592, he says:

> This shrine was builded about a man's height, all of stone, then upwarde of tymber plain, within the which was a chest of yron, conteining the bones of Thomas Becket, scul and al, with the wound of his death, and the peece cut out of his scull, laide in the same wounde. These bones (by the commaundement of the L. Cromwell) were then and there brent.[40]

Holinshed says that

> . . . the shrine of Thomas Becket in the priorie of Christ's church was likewise taken to the kings vse, and his bones, scull and all, which was there found, with a peece broken out by the wound of his death, were all burnt in the same church by the lord Cromwell.[41]

The testimony is not an independent one, however, for the earliest edition which contains it acknowledges in the margin that it was taken from Stow by Abraham Fleming.[42] Wriothesley's *Chronicle* says:

> Allso Saint Austens Abbey, at Canterbury, was suppressed, and the shryne and goodes taken to the Kinges treasurye, and St. Thomas of Canterburies shryne allso, and the monkes commaunded to chaunge theyr habettes, and then after they should knowe the Kinges further pleasure; and the bones of St. Thomas of Canterbury were brent in the same church by my Lord Crumwell.[43]

It has always been a question whether Wriothesley copied from Stow or Stow from Wriothesley. Only one manuscript of Wriothesley remains, and it embodies additions made after his death in 1561–2.[44] It looks as if the passage in Wriothesley had been based upon the one in Stow's Chronicle, as Dean Milman has said, and as if a sentence had been omitted which leaves the expression, "in the same Church" without antecedent.[45]

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[40] Quoted in Milman, *loc. cit.* Dr. Mason (*op. cit.*, p. 147) quotes the same passage, but from the 1615 edition of the *Annales.*

[41] *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1808), III, 806–7. Quoted by Dr. Mason (*op. cit.*, pp. 147–8) from Hooker's ed. (1586), III, 945.

[42] Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 147, note 2.

[43] Ed. W. D. Hamilton (Camden Society, N. S., XI, 1875) I, 86. Also quoted by Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

[44] Milman, *loc. cit.*

Authorities for the burying of the bones are not so numerous, but they are too weighty to be dismissed lightly. The earliest is an explicit statement drawn up at the end of 1538 or the beginning of the following year, as a defence of the king's recent measures in religion. The existing copy is in the handwriting of Thomas Derby, and it has been conjectured that it is a set of notes for a sermon or a document intended for circulation on the continent.[46] This statement says:

> . . . yet nevertheless it was arrested that his shrines and bones should be taken away and bestowed in such place, as the same should cause no superstition afterwards ~~as it is indeed amonges other of that sorte conveyed and buryed in a noble towre.~~ And forasmuch as his head almost whole was found with the rest of the bones closed within the shrine, and that there was in that church a great scoull of another head, but much greater, by the iii quarter parts than that part which was lacking in the head closed within the shrine, whereby it appeared that the same was but a feigned fiction, if this head was brent, was therefore S. Thomas brent? Assuredly it concludeth not. St. Swithan and other reliques where about abuse of hypocrisy was, be laid safe, and not as it is untruly surmitted brent, but according to reason collocate secretly, where there shall be no cause of superstition given by them, as some say that for the like cause the body of Moyses was hidden lest the Jews should fall to idolatry.[47]

Since the interpretation of this passage has varied, it may be justifiable to point out that two things are here stated: (1) it was ordered that the bones should be taken away and bestowed in a place where they would give no rise to superstition; (2) a skull which was but a fiction was burned. If the true bones were burned, they were burned without order, and the framers of the document, who were undoubtedly in possession of the facts, were deliberately trying to deceive the people by giving the impression that only the spurious relics were burned. Dean Hutton, in his biography of Becket, says, "It is to be observed that there is no denial that the bones of S. Thomas were burnt, but only a denial that the burning of other bones is evidence that they were."[48] But this is surely attributing motives of unnecessary duplicity to the authors of the document. The whole spirit of the passage is a refutation of the theory that the bones were burned. There have been different guesses as to the reason for the marking out of part of one sentence. Dr. Mason thinks the words were struck out "because it was remembered that St. Thomas's relics had been dealt with in another manner at Canterbury, as St. Cuthbert's were at Durham, and not conveyed with the jewels."[49] Dean Milman (who considered the document notes for a sermon) thought the words were crossed out because it was "perhaps imprudent to proclaim at St. Paul's Cross the hiding place of these and other famous relics," and he takes the passage to indicate that the relics "were buried together in the round tower of St. Thomas Chapel."[50] If Dr. Mason is right, the erasure shows a desire for accuracy that enhances the value of the testimony.

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[45] *Ibid.*, p. 228.

[46] Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, pp. 156–7.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 158–9, quoting from the original in the Record Office.

Another important piece of evidence is a work entitled, *Il Pelerino Inglese*, published in Italian in 1552, and later in English. It was written by William Thomas, who was Clerk of the Privy Council in the reign of Edward VI. Thomas admits the defacing of the shrine, but says he cannot tell whether it "hath bene the undoyng of the canonised saint or not." Then he adds,

> Butt this is true, that the bones are spred amongest the bones of so many dead men, that without some greate Miracle they wyll not be founde agayne.[51]

This is certainly not the language that would be used by a man who believed that the bones had been burned, and the ashes scattered to the wind!

*The Life of Sir Thomas More*, by Nicholas Harpsfield, has already been cited in the testimony that the bones were burned.[52] But there is a later life of More,[53] based upon the lives of Harpsfield and Roper, which says that the relics of St. Thomas were buried. This work was written in 1599 by someone who calls himself "Ro: Ba:."[54] The passage about the destruction of the shrine is paraphrased from Harpsfield, but altered to read:

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[48] Cambridge, 1926, p. 304.

[49] *Op. cit.*, p. 159, note 1.

[50] *Op. cit.*, p. 222.

[51] Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 162. In two MSS. the reading is "his bones" instead of "the bones." *Ibid.*, note 10.

> Albeit we have of late (God give us his grace to repent, and see our folie and impietie) unshrined him, and buried his holie relicks; and have made him, after so manie hundred yeares, a traytor to the King, who honoured him for a blessed Saint, as did all the Kings his Successors.[55]

What is the motive for the change from "burned" to "buried"? As Dr. Mason says, "Ro: Ba:" either intended to correct the manuscript before him, or he misread it.[56] The latter is unthinkable, because Harpsfield had stressed the idea of burning the bones by citing a parallel:

> Even as they have taken up and burned the bones of blessed St. Augustine, our Apostle, who brought the faith of Jesus Christ first into this realm.[57]

This statement, incidentally, which seems entirely without foundation,[58] was omitted by "Ro: Ba:." Religious prejudice could not have been responsible for the alteration and the omission, for "Ro: Ba:" was of the Roman faith.[59]

The silence of certain people who would be expected to mention the burning of the bones if they had known of such an occurrence may be almost as eloquent as witnesses: the silence of Archbishop Parker, for instance, when he speaks of the investigation which the king instituted into the life of the former archbishop;[60] and the silence of John Bale, who needed a reference to such an event to complete his parallel between the king and Josias.[61] Likewise, the lack of any royal order for the burning of the bones, and of any reference to such a proceeding in the royal proclamation of November 16, 1538,[62] or in the Letter to the Justices of the following month,[63] antagonistic as both documents were to Becket, must have weighty significance.

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[52] Above, p. 246.
[53] Printed in Christopher Wordsworth, *Ecclesiastical Biography* (London, 1853), II, 48–185.
[54] Dean Milman, *Archaeologia*, LIII (1), 226.
[55] Wordsworth, *op. cit.*, II, 181.
[56] *Op. cit.*, p. 139.
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[59] Milman, *loc. cit.*

The general manner of action taken by Henry VIII toward the bones of unshrined saints may be learned from an injunction issued in 1541:

> . . . we did not only cause the images and bones of suche as they resorted and offered unto, with the ornaments of the same, and all such wrytings and monuments of fayned myracles, wherewith they were illuded, to be taken away in all places of our realme, . . .[64]

The bones of St. Richard at Chichester and of St. Hugh at Lincoln were ordered to be conveyed to the Tower of London;[65] St. Cuthbert was buried under the same place where his shrine stood;[66] the bones of St. Swithin, according to the semi-official statement, were deposited secretly but safely where they might be no cause of superstition.[67] There is no record of the burning of the bones of any unshrined saint by the order of Henry VIII. On the other hand, it was the practice of the Roman Church to burn the bones of one who had been condemned after his death as a heretic. Between 1308 and 1322 the inquisitor, Bernard Gui, exhumed and burnt in southern France sixty-seven corpses.[68] In 1428, by order of Pope Martin V, the remains of John Wycliffe were dug up and burned by Bishop Fleming, and his ashes thrown into the river Swift.[69] In 1557, the bones of John Tooly, who before his death had denounced the pope, were exhumed and burned.[70] When in 1533, the bones of William Tracy, a Gloucestershire squire who had expressed in his will his disapproval of Masses and saints, were exhumed and burned following the judgment of a convocation, the King was indignant, and it cost the Chancellor three hundred pounds to gain pardon for his share in the matter.[71] The burning of exhumed bones was a thoroughly Roman procedure, but one entirely foreign to the practice of Henry VIII.

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[60] Dr. Mason, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–2.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 142–4.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 144–5.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 124.
[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 128.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 130.
[67] Above, p. 248.
[68] H. B. Workman, *John Wyclif* (Oxford, 1926), p. 319.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 320; Lewis Sergeant, *John Wyclif* (New York, 1893), pp. 350–1.

The following conclusions may perhaps fairly be drawn from this summary of the evidence:

1. It is impossible to prove beyond question that either story concerning the disposition of the bones of St. Thomas is fact and that the other is legend.

2. The story that the bones were burned originated from the same source as the story of the mock trial, which has been discarded by all scholars, and the two stories seem to be of a piece.

3. It is impossible to say, with Dean Hutton, "The fact is that all contemporary evidence states that the bones were burnt; and that this was never, so far as I know, explicitly or authoritatively denied."[72] The statement in the handwriting of Thomas Derby is contemporary evidence, and far from asserting the burning of the bones, it implies a denial of such an event. Most of the evidence *for* the burning of the bones is clearly based upon rumor, or written or inspired by the pope, who was hardly in a position to gain the true facts.[73]

4. There is no reason for questioning the sincerity of the pope in believing the rumors of the mock trial and the burning of the bones. Doubtless he believed both stories. But he was already provoked with King Henry, in fact, he had already

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[70] John Foxe, *The Book of Martyrs*, revised by William Bramley-Moore (London, n. d.), pp. 506–7.

[71] *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, arranged by James Gairdner, V, 438; VI, 17; Hall's *Chronicle* (London, 1809), p. 796.

[72] *Op. cit.*, p. 305.

[73] See above, pp. 244–48.

drawn up a bull of excommunication against him,[74] and consequently was in a frame of mind hospitable to such tales.

5. In the absence of any order for the burning of the bones, or any contemporary English testimony that they were burned, and in the presence of a contemporary semi-official denial of such a procedure, the weight of probability would seem to favor the opinion that the bones were buried, and not burned. That the alternate story should come to be accepted and held for so many years is not surprising in view of the height of feeling on the subject, and the weighty influence which was behind the story.

6. It seems that, as in the case of the mock trial, the story of the burning of the bones must have originated from the exaggeration attendant upon the excitement of the moment, and the attributing to King Henry VIII of a Roman method of procedure.

But the legend of the mock trial and that of the burning of the bones, if the latter may be considered legend, were not the only bits of fiction which accumulated about the destruction of Becket's shrine. There is a forged account of the demolition of the shrine, which represents King Henry as present at the scene superintending the operations:

> After this (viz. in 1538) his highness caused Thomas Beckets Tombe to be rased, his highness standing by and seuerall of the Privy Councell and of the Clergy then being present. This tombe being opened there was the bones and scull of Thomas Becket entire, notwithstanding the Monkes had shewed another scull in liew of the true one, which being giuen unto the king, he sayd to the Lords of his privie Councell and to the Clergy there present, "Bring me here the other scull which these Rogeish monkes shewed unto myne and my predecessors subiects for the reall one. Lett these two sculls be brought, I command yee, and all these bones that wee may dispose of them otherwise, and not haue our subiects gulled and made to Idolators." At whose command a box was fetcht and the Bones locked up therein and the Bishop of Canterbury and Sr Thomas Cromwell charged to dispose of them and to seperate them where they may noe more be knowne from others . . .[75]

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[74] The bull of August 30, 1535. It is printed in Gilbert Burnet, *History of the Reformation* (2nd ed., London, 1681), I, 245–7.

[75] Printed from Add. MS. 33746 by G. F. Warner, "A Forged Account of the Demolition of the Shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury," *English Historical Review*, VI, 754.

Then the spurious document tells of the discovery of the treasure in a hollow passage under the ground, and quotes a speech which the king is supposed to have delivered to his Privy Council, on the falseness of monks and bishops, and in justification of his own proceedings. Mr. Warner identifies the writer of the account as Robert Ware, the author of a pamphlet called, *The Hunting of the Romish Fox* (1683). The document is found in a small quarto of the latter part of the seventeenth century, purporting to be Memoirs of Sir Henry Sidney and Lord Cecil Burghley from 1530 to 1566. Mr. Warner shows, however, that the historical contents of the volume were derived from Morgan Godwin's *Annals of England*, first published in 1630, and from Stow's *Annals*, which the compiler supplemented from his own imagination.[76]

The conclusion that the bones of Thomas Becket were buried leaves room for the possibility that the bones discovered in 1888 may have been those of the former archbishop. Into all the arguments for and against such a belief, it seems unnecessary to go here. Dr. Mason's book[77] assembles all the evidence dealing with the injury to the skull at the time of martyrdom and all the information available concerning the skull which was found. The principal facts about the latter are as follows: On January 23, 1888, in the course of excavation for research purposes in the crypt under Trinity Chapel, Canterbury Cathedral, a coffin was discovered containing the skeleton of a man, with the bones all at the top of the coffin, as though they had been placed there hastily. When the bones were arranged, it was found that a piece on the left side of the skull was missing. They were undoubtedly the bones of a man corresponding in age and height to what is known of St. Thomas, and of a man who was killed by a blow on the left side of the head from a sharp-edged weapon.[78]

The whole problem of the identity of the bones depends upon one question, stated by Dr. Mason, "If at the time of the martyrdom a large part of St. Thomas's skull was severed from the rest, then this is not the skull of St. Thomas."[79] Most of the testimony is to the effect that a large portion of the head was cut off at the time of the martyrdom: William Fitzstephen, Edward Grim, Benedict, John of Salisbury, Herbert—all the leading contemporary authorities agree on this matter.[80] The only writer whose testimony differs materially on this point from that of the others is Gervase, a chronicler whose account is later than that of most of the other writers.[81] He alone makes no reference to the *corona* which the others say was cut off. Unless the silence of one writer is worth more than the testimony of twelve, we shall have to conclude that a large portion of the head was cut off at the time of the martyrdom, and that, therefore, the skull found in 1888 could not be that of St. Thomas. It is at least interesting, and possibly also significant, as Dean Hutton says,[82] that most of those who saw the bones when they were unearthed were convinced that they were not those of the great archbishop.

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[76] *Ibid.*, pp. 755–6.
[77] *What became of the Bones of St. Thomas?* (Cambridge, 1920).
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

More recently a skeleton has been found which some people at first thought to be that of Thomas Becket. In 1927, while boring a well in the courtyard of a college at Douai, France, workmen discovered a stone sarcophagus, within which was a lead shell containing a mummy, carefully bandaged. The mummy was found upon examination to have the hands cut off and the brain removed.[83] Sacramental vessels, a part of a hair shirt, and garments said to bear the arms of Becket confirmed the impression that this was the skeleton of the archbishop. The theory is based upon the flimsiest sort of foundation, but it is a good example of a germ from which a widespread legend may develop. Investigation soon proved the remains to be those of the Venerable John Southworth, an English Roman Catholic priest who was martyred at Tyburn on June 28, 1654.[84]

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

[80] Grim, "et summitate coronae, quam sancti chrismatis unctio dicaverat Deo, abrasa." *Materials*, II, 437. Abbott says in regard to the meaning of "coronae," "Here the context makes it more easy to see that the meaning is 'crown of the head.'" *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, (London, 1898), I, 128, note 2. Anon. I., "amputavitque summitatem coronae ejus." *Materials*, IV, 77. Abbott says in interpretation, " 'Crown (coronae),' apparently used here, as by Grim, for 'the crown of the head.' The name was also given (Stanley, p. 284, App. II) to the circle of hair left on a priest's head by the tonsure. Fitzstephen (*Mat.* III, 142) has, first, 'corona capitis,' and then (having thus defined it) 'coronae,' absolutely." *Op. cit.*, I, 132, note 12. Anon. V., "Primus vero tortorum verticem capitis ei praecidit." *Materials*, IV, 198. Guernes, ll. 5586–7, "Si que de la corune le cupel enporta E la hure abati e granment entama." Fitzstephen, "et corona capitis tota ei amputata est." *Materials*, III, 142. John of Salisbury, "corona capitis, quam sacri chrismatis unctio Deo dicaverat, amputata (quod et dictu horribile est) funestis gladiis jam defuncti ejicerent cerebrum." *Materials*, II, 320. Benedict, "Tertius autem plurimam testae portionem amputando vulnus praecedens horribiliter ampliavit." *Materials*, II, 13. Herbert, "Et ita a lictoribus decalvatus decoronatus est." *Materials*, III, 506. Anon. II., "capitis, cum cerebro, summitate praecisa." *Materials*, IV, 131. Anon. IV., "coronam rasilem abscidit, testam capitis dissipavit." *Materials*, IV, 194. Anon. X., "Coronam, sicut fuit, fere absciderunt." *Materials*, IV, 436. *The Saga* (I, 544), "he brandisheth the sword and cutteth away nearly the whole of the crown, so that only a little held it to the forehead."

[81] *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs (Rolls Series; London, 1880), p. 227. See Dr. Mason's treatment of the testimony of Gervase, *op. cit.*, pp. 53–5.

[82] *Op. cit.*, p. 300.

The present writer feels guilty of some temerity in failing to agree altogether with the conclusions of either Dean Hutton or Dr. Mason in regard to the disposition of the bones of St. Thomas. He is of the opinion that though the bones were not burned in 1538, they were buried so successfully that there is little likelihood of their ever being discovered. He is inclined to think that William Thomas stated the truth when he said, "the bones are spread amongest the bones of so many dead men, that without some greate Miracle they wyll not be founde agayne."[85] And this situation is, after all, exactly as it should be. The bones of Thomas Becket, if discovered now, could be of no more service in bringing the medieval hero closer to us, or of throwing light upon his turbulent but heroic life, than can the lock of Milton's hair displayed in a showcase in the cottage at Chalfont St. Giles help us to understand the motives of the sublime Puritan or aid us in interpreting *Paradise Lost.*

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[83] *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, July 20 and 21, 1927.

[84] *The New York Times*, October 9, 1927; *The Sunday Times* (London), probably of the same date, though the clipping I have is undated.

[85] See above, p. 249.

## CONCLUSION

> His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, "This was a man!"
>
> *Julius Caesar*, Act V, Scene 5.

In the course of the present study of the legends associated with the name of Thomas Becket, several points of essential importance in relation to the body of material treated have become apparent:

(1) The legend of Becket took form at a surprisingly early date. Even the elaborate story of the Saracen Princess originated within a hundred years of his death. The earliest lives contain material of obviously legendary character. Fitzstephen, whose biography was written within two or three years of the martyrdom, relates several stories plainly legendary: dreams of the mother of Thomas prophetic of her son's greatness; the prophecy of the midwife, when she took the child in her arms, that she had raised from the ground a future archbishop; the dream of the hostess of Thomas when Becket as a young man first joined the household of Theobald; and the incident of the chancellor's cloak thrown to a beggar by the king as the two friends were riding through the street. Benedict of Peterborough, whose first book of miracles was composed within one to four years after the martyrdom, relates prophecies connected with the death of Becket, showing that the future glory of Canterbury had been predicted by a monk of Jerusalem ten years before the martyrdom, and that an inhabitant of Argentam was supernaturally informed of the martyrdom before the news had reached his town. Although Benedict is usually very conservative in his accounts of the miracles, he relates the remarkable tale of a pilgrim who saved his host's house from fire by leaping on the roof and fighting back the fire with a phial of the Canterbury Water placed on the end of a pole.

(2) The legendary material connected with Becket is impressive in its quantity and variety. Legends surround his

parentage, his birth, his life, his death, his remains, and his garments. Miracles, visions, and prophecies are associated with him. We have record of at least five hundred miracles of St. Thomas, many more than are recorded in the entire Bible. His healing power was manifested not only in England, but in Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy, the Low Countries, Denmark, Norway, and even Germany. All manner of disease was healed: blindness, deafness, dumbness, lameness, paralysis, leprosy, dropsy, madness, epilepsy, and fever. Lost members of the body were restored: childbirth was assured in despite of the laws of Nature; and men were raised from the dead. Tempests were stilled, and men were delivered from all manner of perils both on sea and on land. Then, descending to the trivial, the versatile saint was pleased to exert his power upon animals as well as men, and to extinguish and relight the candles of his votaries.

(3) Legendry associated with the name of Becket has been singularly persistent and has sometimes for centuries enjoyed a triumph over historic fact. The authenticity of the Legend of the Saracen Princess was not challenged until 1790, and even during the nineteenth century it appeared frequently in works purporting to be historical. Throughout the Middle Ages paintings of the martyrdom represented Becket before the altar, and an eighteenth-century account describes the murder "as he stood officiating at the altar."[1] The tradition that De Tracy struck the first blow at the Archbishop persisted even to Stanley.

(4) Anyone studying the legend of Becket must be impressed by its picturesque character. Nothing is more romantic than the story of the Saracen Princess who follows her lover, the father of the future archbishop, across the sea, knowing but two words of his language and having no assurance, other than her faith, that she will find him at the end of her journey, and yet who succeeds in her quest and is married to the man she has sought. The birth and death of Becket are heralded by dreams and portents. The accounts of his childhood abound in such delightful stories as that of the vision in which the Holy Virgin appears

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[1] *A Most Learned and Eloquent Speech . . . taken out of the Introduction to Lilly's Grammar* (London, 1722), pp. 22–23.

to him and delivers the keys of heaven into his keeping; that in which his father coming to visit him at school, falls down and worships him in recognition of what he is to become; or the anecdote of his school days in Paris, in which the Holy Virgin in answer to his prayer sends him an ivory casket containing a miniature set of bishop's robes, and thus both vindicates him in the eyes of his fellow-students and intimates his future greatness. The accounts of his life as archbishop show him attended by visions which counsel certain courses of action, which serve to warn him of the evil intentions of his enemies, and which assure him of martyrdom and glory. The miraculous power possessed by Becket during his life enables him to meet sudden emergencies, such as the necessity of opening a locked gate at Northampton, and, as in the miracle of the capon leg which is changed to a carp, sometimes turns circumstantial evidence against him into proof of his sanctity. The miracles performed by the saint reveal him as the friend of the poor and the needy, show him distributing rewards and punishments according to the deserts of mankind, and reveal him mindful even of birds and using them to illustrate his wonder-working power. The saint even appears sometimes to be in a humorous mood, and plays pranks with the vials of the Canterbury Water which the pilgrims are taking home; and sometimes he is so tolerant as to overlook offences, especially against himself, which deserve punishment.

(5) The legend of Becket shows a tendency to throw a glamour of romance and sanctity about the character of Becket. If a study of the life of the Saint determines anything at all, it reveals his essential human quality. But this characteristic is forgotten, and Becket becomes in legend a saint without flaw or blemish. The struggle between the Archbishop, who hurls Fitz-Urse from him so violently that the latter almost falls to the floor, and who in anger applies a violent epithet to his adversary, contrasts strikingly with the medieval picture of the slaughter of an unresisting priest. The long strife between Becket and the king is not a contest between a victim and a persecutor, but the struggle of the two greatest men of their generation, both of them powerful and unyielding, and yet both human and possessed of a violent temper. Visions prophetic of

Becket's martyrdom and visions after his death show him receiving the greatest glory in heaven and occupying a seat among the apostles. Becket was considered greater than the other martyrs because he was killed by his own people and because he was thought to have died for the universal cause of the church instead of for himself. The popular estimate of Becket becomes a poetic conception, in which the foibles of human nature have been forgotten.

(6) Finally, the legends show a tendency to draw a parallel between Jesus and Becket. Thomas is credited with turning water into wine, and he miraculously provides food, on at least one occasion, for himself and his companions. The tree under which the knights make their plot to kill the Archbishop withers away. All Nature is sympathetic at the time of the martyrdom; the sun hides his face, refusing to look upon such a deed. When Grim attempts to shield his master from the sword, the Archbishop reproves him. When the monks have gathered into a chalice the brains and blood of the martyred archbishop, and are carrying it unto the altar, the Holy Ghost descends upon it in the likeness of a dove. When the knights plundering the palace discover the haircloth shirts, most of the band exclaim, "This is a just man," and depart, beating their breasts. Thomas is made to appear, after his martyrdom, in visions which reveal him as living and manifesting the scars of his wounds. Visions even show him returning to the earth on the third day after his death to explain that his fame, temporarily obscured by his enemies, will soon burst forth.

After all the mists of legend shall have been cleared away, after all the fog of misunderstanding shall have been dispelled, there will remain as abundant justification of his enduring greatness the personal character of Becket. One of the reasons, perhaps, for his popularity, especially during the Middle Ages, was that he represented in his own life the struggle between flesh and spirit. At first a lover of military prowess and of temporal pomp, he came to sacrifice his life in a spiritual conflict. If he was sometimes a politician, he was more frequently a statesman; though he was a man of hasty temper, he was benign and charitable to the poor; though he possessed a shrewd knowledge of the ways of men and kings, he was an idealist. If he desired the fate which befell him, it was probably less for his personal glory than for the triumph of the cause which he represented. That he was human enough to resist the officers who came determined to force him to absolve the bishops or, if they failed, to kill him, and that he perhaps even provoked the first stroke, only serve to make him comprehensible to us. The medieval conception of a saint without flaw or blemish is hardly our modern ideal. There can be no doubt that the spirit triumphed in the end. When he saw that his time had really come, he bowed his head in submission to the sword of his enemies. It is difficult to see how anyone, even though he began with an adverse attitude toward the Archbishop, could study his life open-mindedly without an increasing sympathy. Saint he is yet to some, and martyr to others, but the greatest claim of Thomas Becket to universal admiration is that it may be said of him, just as truly as of Brutus, to whom his enemy, Mark Anthony, paid tribute, "This was a man!"

## APPENDIX A

### THE LEGEND OF THE SARACEN PRINCESS AS GIVEN IN BODLEIAN MS. 14716 OF THE SOUTH ENGLISH LEGENDARY

Now MS. Rawl. poet. 225, f. 53a—56a, fifteenth century.[1]

Ihc þ$^t$ died on þ$^e$ rode    & sithin res up fro deth to lyf
he vs bou3tte w$^t$ his p*r*eci*ous* blod    be þ$^e$ v*er*tu of hys wound*es* fyf
In heuyn he graunte hem alle saule fode    & i*n* þis world wel to thriue
þ$^t$ wil her*e* of a martir good    hov he was born w$^t$outin stryf
W$^t$outyn strif. I wil to 3ow rede    hov sey*nt* Thomas was begetin & born
In our*e* begy*n*nyg þ$^t$ kyng vs spede    þ$^t$ bar þ$^e$ holy corvn of thorn
A riche burgees of lond & lede    Of lundon cite his fadir was born
Gilbert Beket wyse ma*n* in dede    his name is callyd þ*us* aforn
Beforn 3ow alle mor*e* & lasse    to 3ow I say þis storye
His modir was born in hednes    in þ$^e$ lond of Ivrie
Gret pite it was iwys    þ$^t$ hir fadir was so stovt & hardy
To cristin men he did wikkydnes    to alle þo þ$^t$ 3ode*n* hym by
By hym my3t gon no palmar*es*    In his lond on pilgrimage
But anon þei taken wer*e*    And don suythe i*n* strong osttage
Gilbert beket as I sayde ere and Richard    þ$^t$ was bothe his ma*n* & his page
þei token hir way bothe i*n* fer*e*    And kemy*n* to broondys þ$^e$ ryvage
At rivage cite þei schepyd þan    good wynd & wedir god hem sent
And w$^t$ hem othir cristin men    Aforn þ$^e$ cite of Acris anon þei stint
þan 3ode*n* þei forth to þ$^e$ flovm Iordon    W$^t$ holy p*r*ayer*es* as god hem kente
And so forth vnto ihe*rusa*lem þei com    þ*er* to abiden veramente
In ihe*rusa*lem þei restin þem þan    ffor hir ese & hir entent
ffor þei weren so weri of gon    þ$^t$ þei wer*e* ner hand vpspent
Seuyn ny3t þei restid þer*e*    þan 3ode þei fort vpon þ$^e$ morn
to Bedlam bourge to seken i*n* fer*e*    þ*er* god was of his modir born
To bedlam þei 3ode*n* bothe*n* tuoo    to seken þ$^e$ holy halvis þer*e*
Be þ$^e$ montayn of synay þei gun go    & at þ$^e$ mo*n*tay*n* of olivete
Of ameroude þ$^e$ sovdon þ$^t$ was þer*e*    þ$^t$ was al c*r*istin ma*n*nys foo
Anon & hastly taken þei wer*e*    And put i*n* p*r*isoun W$^t$ mekil wo[o]
in mekil woo & peynis grete    To 3eer & half þei wer*e* þ*er*i[n]
litil þei drunken & lesser etyn    & sat i*n* watir vp to hir . . .
hir peynis werin to hem vnmete    M*er*ci my3t þei no3t fy[nde]

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[1] F. Madan, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* (Oxford, 1895), III, 334.

*þer*in hir lyuys þei hadden lete    had god noȝt ben þ$^{t}$ made ma*n*ky[nde]
Mankynde to helpen his wil is ay    What ma*n* to hym p*r*ayes W$^{t}$ glad cher*e*  f 53b
It befil vpon a day    þ$^{t}$ þ$^{e}$ sovdon had a douȝtt*er* dere
In hir herte sche louyd gilberd alway    Whan sche seyȝk him far or neer
Sche had hym on a sabbot day    Out of p*r*isun be hir p*r*ayer*e*
þ$^{e}$ sovdon he s*er*uyd at mete þer*e*    ffor he was ma*n* so hende
þ$^{t}$ alle men love to hym bar*e*    And sayde he was come*n* of gentil kynde
To hym þ$^{e}$ sovdon fast gan hym bende    & to hym fast gan drawe
And axid hym what Engelond was    & what is þ*er* þ$^{e}$ lawe
Engelond is a gentil cuntre    sayde gilbert þan
And p*r*ise of al cristiante    thourgh al cristindom
Men wolden for his love only    to hys felawes good do
And so þei dedon þe ievry    for his love many mo
And p*r*insepally þ$^{t}$ mayden    þ$^{t}$ lovid gilbert faste
þ$^{e}$ sovdon douȝtt*er* of Ivr*e*    hir herte to hym caste
Sche louyd gilbert hertly    in gret moornyng & woo
þ$^{e}$ sovdonis eyr*e* sche was    ffor children he had nomoo
Of hir he had no ioy    *þer*of no harm was
ffor sche had a bett*er* ende    blest be god of his grace
þ$^{e}$ mayden louyd gilbert sor*e*    in hir herte ful p*r*iuely
Sche louyd hym eu*er* mor*e* & more    and spak w$^{t}$ hym hertly
Sche spek w$^{t}$ hym sekirly    & axid hym of Engelonde
What is þ$^{e}$ lond by & by    & what is ma*n* *þer*in levande
And of cristin ma*n*nis lyf    & of hir leuyng þer*e*
Hov & in what man*ner*    hir bileve wer*e*
Engelond is a meri cuntre    sayde gilbert þan
lunden hat þ$^{t}$ meri cite    þ$^{t}$ I was in born
Of þ$^{e}$ bileve of cristin men    sche oxid hym & of hir ende
Heven schul c*r*istin me*n* haue    Wha*n* þei fr*o* hen wende
Woldist þ$^{u}$ sayde þ$^{e}$ mayden    ȝif on wolde bidden þ$^{e}$
*Su*ffir deth for þi lordis love    and gilbert sayde ȝe
— — I wolde gon in hast    What ma*n* *þer*to me*n* brouȝt
— — mayden seyȝk hym so stedfast    sche was i*n* ful gret thouȝh[t]
— — my lond I wil forsaken    ffor þ$^{e}$ loue of þ$^{e}$
— — become*n* woma*n* cristin    ȝif þ$^{u}$ wilt wedden me
[Wha]n gilbert beket herde þis    he was in ful gret þouȝt
— [h]ir he surid his trevthe I wis    *þer* it was iwrouȝt
— trevthid þei wer*e* boþ$^{e}$ in fer*e*    Anon gilbert gan hym bethinke
[ffo]r he was adrad wel sor*e*    flor gile of woma*n*nys wrenche
he ledde hir forth W$^{t}$ fayre behest    þ$^{e}$ mayden langid sore  f. 54a
Hir herte was to hym kest    & eu*er* mor & more
Gilbert & alle his felawes ryȝt    as god his g*r*ace to hem sent

Out of pr*i*soun brake*n* be nyȝt   & out of þ$^{t}$ lond þei went
þ$^{e}$ iew upon þ$^{e}$ morwe*n*   scholde to hir labour hem lede
In herte he had so gret sorwe   & also mekil drede
ffast he suyd aftir hem   Wiht Iewes many on
But ar þei in to cristindom kem   þ$^{e}$ iewes myȝt noȝt hem ou*er*gon
And whan þei myȝt noȝt taken hem   hom ageyn þei ȝode*n* þo
Vnto hir lord þ$^{e}$ sovdon   to hym pei were ful wo
Pr*i*uelyche þis mayden made gret mournyg   sche sayde allas þ$^{t}$ sce eu*er* was born
My*n* ioy my*n* blisse & my*n* lykyng   Now I haue it lorn
Sche wepte & made mekil mone   Ma*n* wist neu*er* woma*n* did more
Ne telle*n* of suylk woman no   þ$^{t}$ love eu*er* bouȝt so sore
ffor be nyȝtte sche ȝode alon   Sche ne wist whedirward
And mone w$^{t}$ hir sche had su*m*   To sekin good gilbert
Sche sparid for non eritage   þ$^{t}$ sche myȝt come*n* to
ffor hunger for seknes ne for deth   Ne for no man*er* woo
Ne for p*er*il in þ$^{e}$ see   þ$^{t}$ sche muste gon to
Ne sche knew noȝt þ$^{e}$ way þ$^{t}$ sce wolde go
Ne þ$^{t}$ sche scholde among c*r*istin me*n*   fovler þa*n* a hound helden be
Ne no ma*n* hir wold knowe*n*   But in þ$^{e}$ way fast ȝode sche
And whethir sche scholde onlyue finde   Gilbert beket or nouȝt
And whether he wolde hir wedden   whan sche had hym out souȝt
þis mayden made mornyg gret   What hir was best to don
Hir herte was on hym eu*er*   ffor hym sche made many a mournyg mon
Alway be nyȝt sche gan gon   sche wiste noȝt wher sche becam
þan knew sche non othir won   But god was hir gidisman
W$^{t}$ godd*es* grace sche was led   Of c*r*istin me*n* þ$^{t}$ covte on*n* hir language
W$^{t}$ hem sche cam vnto þ$^{e}$ see   þ*er* had þei redi passage
þ$^{e}$ way sche oxid in hir language   Into engelond
And so sce cam ou*er* w$^{t}$ pilgrimys   as I haue vndirstonde
And whan sche hedir cam   Englys couthe sche non
But gilbert gilbert beket beket   & meri loundon
Sche coude of no man*er* way   ne speke no word mo
But eu*er* sche oxid in hir language   to lundon for to go
W$^{t}$ pilgrimis be godd*es* grace   to lundon sche cam
And whan sche was come*n* þedir   þ*er* sche knew no ma*n*
Sche coude non englis speke*n*   but as a best it were
þ*er*for þ$^{e}$ pupil on hir wonderid   Men wy*m*me*n* & childerin þ*er*e   f. 54b
In many stretis sche ȝode   to & fro al alone
And aforn gilbert*es* gate   sche was comy*n* sone
What w$^{t}$ noyse & cri   forth sche ȝode good pas
To sche cam to þ$^{e}$ halle dore   þ*er* gilbert weddid was
And Thomas was þ*er*in born   Graci*ous* is þ$^{t}$ plas

þ*er* is now anospital   rerid of seynt thomas
Gilbert was wedid þᵗ same day   to a mayden he louyd suete
A burges douȝtt*er* of london   duellande in temys strete
þei wer*e* alle in mydd*es* of hir mete   Wᵗ mekil game & gle
Whan þis mayden þedir cam   þᵉ sovdonis douȝtt*er* of Ivre
As Richard stod wᵗ in   gret noyse he herde þ*ere*
Vnto þᵉ dore he ȝode anon   to wetin what dyn þer wer*e*
He stod ful stille & gan hym bethynke   Whan he þᵗ mayden gan se
He sayde welcome damysel ȝinge   ffro ȝour*e* owen cuntre
Hedir to my mayst*er* & to me   ȝe ar welcomy*n* i*n* certayn
Sittis & restis awhile ȝe   Vnto I gon in & come ageyn
Richard ȝode ageyn hastely   & sayde to his maist*er* wᵗoutin les
Sir hedir is comy*n* sekirly   þᵉ sovdonis douȝtt*er* of hednes
þᵗ þᵘ surid þi trovthe vnto   Whan þᵘ & I wer*e* i*n* a dep donngon
Wᵗ mekil car*e* & mekil woo   We haddin y nough i*n* þᵗ p*r*isoun
þ*er*for maist*er* a uise weel þᵉ   be þi self allone
And think how sche vs releuyd   out of sorwe & moone
Gilbert ful gret wondir had   & i*n* his herte mekil þouȝt
He bad Richard to lede*n* hir forth   & to his godsyp hir brouȝt
Gylbert*es* godsyp.  Wᵗ fayr*e* chere   & wᵗ good herte hir nom
And hastely þ*er*aftir   Gilbert to hir com
þᵉ mayden for ioy  sche swenyd anon.  Wᵗ alle
Gret swem of hir had þᵉ pepil   þᵗ wer*e* wᵗ i*n* þᵗ walle
Gilbert stille ȝode forth   as nothing wer*e*
sex bisscheppis þᵗ tyme   at seynt povlis werin þ*ere*
þer was þᵉ bisschop of þᵗ Ce[2]   loundon is þᵉ name
And þᵉ bisschop of Ely   a ful good ma*n* of fame
þᵉ erchebisschop of Caunt*er*bery   Sir Tybavd hyȝt þᵗ tyme
A good ma*n* & a gracio*us*   þ*us* we fynde in ryme
þᵉ erchebisschop of ȝoork   & þᵉ bisschop of salysberi
& þᵉ bisschop of Wy*n*chest*er*   alle þise wer*in* þ*er* worthi
As it had ben at a p*ar*lement   ffor nede of þᵉ londe
Gilbert i*n* þis wondir cas   of hem counsel wold fonge
Gilbert þouȝtte y*n* his hert   Whan þei hadden eten   f. 55a
Vnto þe lordis to gon   Wᵗ hem for to speken
To seynt povlys he ȝode   to taken guod red anon
What was best & mest worschipe   Wᵗ þᵗ mayden to don
þᵉ bisschop of lundon  anon he fond þ*ere*
And othir fyve bisschoppis   Wᵗ hym also þ*er* were

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[2] Perhaps for *Cite* or even *see*.

So þ*er* werin vj bisschoppis    þe wysist of þe lond
And aforn hem alle    gilbert gan forth stond
þ*er* he telde hem opinly    how he had i*n* hednes be
& of þe sovdonis douȝtt*er*    þt was so gentil & fre
Sche wold become*n* c*r*istin woma*n*    ffor þe loue of hym
ȝif he hir wolde wedden    sche wolde forsakyn hir kyn
And how he & his ma*n*    Atuen hem gan speken
ffor dred of hir wordis    þe p*r*isun be nyȝt þei breken
And now sche is hedir comy*n*    and so far has gon
Gret wondir alle þei hadden    ffor englis sche covde non
Whan þe bisschoppis hadden herd    al þt gilbert he*m* tolde
þe bisschop of Winchest*er* best vndirstod    ffor he was eu*er* wisest & bold
þis is godd*es* grace he sayde    þt sche is heder comen
Out of hir owyn lond so wyde    þt sche was noȝt ou*er*comen
And sche covde no language    to axe*n* hir mete ne drynke
. . . . soth of suylk a leuage    it was a passande suynke
Alle þis bisschoppis sayden    ȝif god has ordenyd so
ȝif þt sche wil ben cristin    and c*r*istindom taken hir to
Gilbert schal hir wedden & kepe*n*    Su*m* kynde may of he*m*m springe
And al holy chirche helpen    And to Engelond gret ioyenge
ffor wel may we alle knowen    & wel vndirstande
þt sche is hedir comyn    Wt grace of godd*es* sonde
Alle þise bisshoppis co*n*sentyd    Anon wt though[t]
For þt god wil haue sauyd    lorn it schal ben noȝt
þei sayden he schal hir wedde*n*    And hold hir to his wyf
ȝif sche wilbe c*r*istin wo*m*ma*n*    And turne to god hir lyf
Anon vpon þe morn    Alle thyng was mad ȝare
At seynt povlis beforn    And cristnid sce scholde be*n* þere
þe watir was alredy    To hir baptesing
þise bisschoppis co*m*maundid hastly    þe mayden aforn hem bryng
Whan sche was comy*n* aforn hem    þei oxid hir anon
ȝif sche c*r*istin wo*m*ma*n* wolde ben    And turne to cristindom
In hir language ansuerde þis mayden    fful meekly ageyn
ȝif gilbert wil me wedden    I wil ben c*r*istin feyn
And but he wil þ*us* don    Sche wil noȝt c*r*istin fange    f. 55b
Sche wil hom ageyn gon    In to hir owyn lande
Gilbert knew hir language    þe mayden stod wel stille
he sayde to þe lord*es* of heye lynage    Sche wold hir oth fulfille
þis mayden baptiȝid was son    Among þe lord*es* & bisschoppis ilkon
Mekik[3] of þe comonute of þe toun    to sen hir baptisid was many on

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[3] Possibly for *mekil.*

In reu*er*ense of þ$^{e}$ heye lynage   & of hir worschipful blood also
Sche was cleer as saffer vsage   & wel bevtewovs þ*er*to
þei t*ur*nyd hir hethen name anon   þ$^{t}$ callid was first ysope
& namyd hir þ*er* Ione   In þ$^{t}$ holy flood cristn to be
Anon forthwyth weddid þei wer*e*   In þ$^{t}$ self place
Ilke ama*n* sayde þ$^{t}$ was þ*er*e   W$^{t}$ hem was godd*es* grace
þ$^{t}$ same ny3t for soth in dede   þis child begetin was
betuyxen hem as we rede   þ$^{e}$ holy martir Thomas
ffro þ$^{t}$ tyme he was begetin þ*er*   Into þ$^{e}$ tyme he was born
Gilbert lay neu*er* more w$^{t}$ hir   þan eu*er* he dude aforn
vpon þ$^{e}$ morwen hastly anon   A gret wil i*n* to his herte cam
To þ$^{e}$ holy lond ageyn to gon   As he aforn had tan
He þou3t he scholde deyen sone   But he 3ode efte ageyn
ffor his wyf he made gret mone   þ$^{t}$ was so 3ing i*n* certeyn
Gret þou3t he had for hir   ffor language sche coude non
þ*er*for was al his care   Wa*n* he ageyn wolde gon
Ofte he was in gret þou3t   & gan to syke sor*e*
3if ony thing mysgreuyd hir avght   he wold be carful mor*e*
þ$^{e}$ heuy cher*e* þ$^{t}$ gilbert made   his wyf it vndirstod
And often whan he sykyd   þan chongid sche hir mod
Sche p*ra*yde hym to tellen hir   What thing greuyd hym au3t
þ$^{t}$ he was so heuy of cher*e*   And in so mekil þou3t
Gilbert sayde goodly ageyn   to his wyf sothende
þ$^{t}$ his hert was ful beyn   ageyn i*n*to þ$^{e}$ holy lond to wende
ffor sy*n*nys þ$^{t}$ he had don   þ*er*of gladly he wolde hym ame*n*de
Sir sayde his wyf anon   Good sped god þ$^{e}$ sende
litel while we haue togedir be*n*   & litel ioy fonge
Aftir my*n* peynis & febilte   þ$^{t}$ I haue sufferid longe
Neu*er*þeles sir I p*ra*y þ$^{e}$   3if þ$^{u}$ haue good wil & pou3t
In godd*es* s*er*uyse ageyn to gon   ffor my loue þ$^{u}$ lete it no3t
And to trauayle þi body ageyn   As ma*n* in herte avghkte
ffor ihc loue þ$^{t}$ suffirde peyn   And w$^{t}$ his blood vs bou3tte
þ*er* was it sen sche was buxom   mek & mylde in mood
sche wold no3t ageyn sayn   Of þ$^{t}$ he þou3t good
Anon sche concent þ*er*to   As his wil was to done   f. 56a
And aft*er*ward sche p*ra*yed hym þo   to g*ra*unte hir a bone
To leuen his ma*n* w$^{t}$ hir at home   ffor he hir language couthe
Mekil co*m*fort it may me don   Wha*n* I speke to hym w$^{t}$ movthe
Wha*n* gilbert had herd hir speke*n*   i*n* herte he was glad þo
He ordeynyd for his houshold wel   & for his mene also
And how sche scolde leuy*n*   to god sent othir sonde
Hastely anon he 3ode agen   Into þ$^{e}$ holy londe

Gilbert let his ma*n* at hom    his name was Richard mome
Gilbert ȝode his way oft son    His pilgr*im*age to done
Into þe holy lond he ȝode    In p*r*ayer*es* as he dude befor*e*
His penaunse to fulfille    þ*er* was he thre ȝer*e* & a half mor*e*
Whan he had out ben    thre ȝer*e* & a half more
Hom in to his lond ageyn    he langorid sore
He cam to Engelond hastely    And faste homward com
þan fond he þ*er* his sone sothly    A wel waxen gro*mm*
Thriuande & thende    as child of kynde was com
Suylk a child levande    has no burges now in lundun
he was fayr*e* & semly    as child of his age myȝt be
Ilke ama*n* of hym speke*n*    þt myȝt hym o wher se

## APPENDIX B

## THE LEGEND OF THE SARACEN PRINCESS AS GIVEN IN JOHN GRANDISON'S LIFE OF ST. THOMAS

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge MS. 467 f. 5b–9a, early fifteen century.[1]

Benedictionib*us* diuine dulcedinis p*rae*uentus insignis m*artyr* & pontifex thomas cui*us* capiti testa p*ro* Xpo abrasa corona ab eo est imposita de lapide p*re*cioso p*rae*cipuam anglie ciuitatem ortu suo londoniam decorauit. Cuius p*ate*r Gilb*er*tus cognomento Beket co*n*ciuib*us* suis no*n* inferior gen*ere* uel diuiciis cum p*r*imeue etatis flore no*n* dum[2] pubesceret c*ru*cem assumens d*omini*cam iherosolima*m* p*er*egre p*ro*ficiscens vnico seruo co*n*tentus est no*mine* ricardo. Qui fortuitu a sarazenis simul capti & in carcere cuiusdam admiraldi co*n*cathenati uictum sibi laborib*us* p*ro*p*r*iis compararunt. Cu*nque* p*er* annu*m* & dimidiu*m* inter ceteros sclauos Gilbertus p*rae* om*n*ib*us* gra*ti*am in oculis admiraldi rep*er*it, ita quod ad eius mensam sepius ue*n*iens uinculatus coram eo stans de ritu & situ viviar*um* gentium inuicem co*n*ferrent. Vnde contigit admiraldi filiam sibi vnica*m* & ualde decoram in Gilb*er*ti amore*m* accendi & nacta oportunitate de eius p*at*ria ortu atq*ue* fide eu*m* inquirere cepit[3] diligenter. Et cum eum pro deo suo libenter morituru*m* audiret se Xpianam fieri si eam in uxorem duceret fatebatur, quod ille caute dissimilauit p*ro*mitte fallacia*m* metuens muliebre*m*. Puella *er*go ex dilatione anxia est effecta & Gilb*er*tus interim cu*m* seruo suo ruptis euasit cathenis & p*ro*sp*er*e repat*r*iauit. Vn*de* puella tristis effecta & pop*u*li ac domus p*at*ris sui oblita quadam nocte recessit sola secu*m* p*ro* uiatico modica deportando. Tandem no*n* absq*ue* multis & incredibilib*us* discriminib*us* p*er*egrinis se associans anglia*m* applicuit & londonias[4] solum inq*u*irens q*ua*re nil aliud p*at*riem notu*m* sciebat. illuc tanqu*am* bestia curatica p*er*uenit, cu*n*que dumbzaret*ur* p*er* uillam q*uo* quedam iuuencula gen*ere* & sermone ignota pueris eam sequentib*us* & deridentib*us* p*er* uicos euagaret. ricardus gilb*er*ti seruitor accurit & eam recognoscens statim d*omi*no suo nu*n*ciauit. Qui tame*n* aduentus eius suspicatus iussit eam[5] ad uicinam matron ducere & si*bi necessar*ia mi*n*strare, que ricardu*m* videns cecidit in extasi resupina. Gilb*er*tus interim a*nimo* fluctuans quid ageret ep*iscopu*m londo*n*ii apud sanctum paulu*m* adiit consulendi. Et ue*n*iens rep*er*it eu*m* cu*m* aliis epis*copis* negocia regni t*rac*tantib*us*. Quib*us* cum rei geste seriem exposuisset, cicestrensis qui int*er* ceteros aderat uoce p*r*oph*et*ica asseruit hoc diuinitus factu*m*, p*r*olem q*u*e secuture*m*[6] que sancta*m* eccl*es*iam sublimaret. Consulentib*us* itaq*ue* ponti*ficibus* baptizatam[7] a sex ep*iscop*is, gilb*er*tus eam solenniter[8] duxit in uxorem. In p*r*ima u*n*o nocte licencia co*n*iugali thomam futuru*m* xpi m*arty*rem genueru*n*t. In crastino a*b* gilb*er*tus tanto desiderio afficiebatur redeundi ad terra*m* s*anc*tam q*uod* vultus eius est in t*r*isticiam insolitam t*ra*nsmutatus, quod uxor adu*er*tens & se in causa[9] fore timens, ta*n*dem cu*m* lac*r*imis & p*r*ecib*us* ueritatem extorsit. ut*que* secure votum suum impleret dimisso si*bi* ricardo eius int*er*prete instantissime supplicauit. Vnde gilb*er*tus no*n* modicu*m* letificatus domo dispo*s*ita & familia assumptis q*ue* *necessar*iis iteru*m* iherosolima*m* est p*ro*fectus.

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[1] M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1912), II, 399.

[2] MSS. 275 and 464 insert *quigatus.*

[3] Omitted in MS. 275.

[4] Londonam, MSS. 275 and 474.

[5] Ricardum, MS. 275.

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[6] Secuturae, MS. 464.
[7] Baptizata, MS. 275.
[8] Solempniter, MS. 464.
[9] Causam, MS. 464.

## APPENDIX C

### THE LEGEND OF THE SARACEN PRINCESS AS GIVEN IN THE ANONYMOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE LEGENDA AUREA

British Museum, Add. MS. 11565 f. 45b, col. 2—f, 46a, col. 2, first quarter of the fifteenth century.[1]

Here endith the life of Innocentes and next folowith the life of seint Thomas of Canturbury. And of Gilbert Beket his fad*er*.[2]

Gylbert beket was seint Thom*a*s of Caunturbury is fader and borne in the Cite of london where seint Thomas of akers chirche is nowe and he he was a ful goode man and in his yong age he toke the crosse and went into the Holy londe and toke with hym on Willyam that was his ma*n* that he loued and trust right wel and so whe*n* god wolde thei come to the Cite of Jerhn[3] and there thei dide ther pilgrimage with ful gret deuocioun. And as thei were comyng homwarde ayene thei were take prisoners of the sarasyns with many other cristen men with with hem. And thei al were brought as prison*er*s to the prync*e* of howse that was clepnd Amyrand and than he co*m*maundide to putte hem in to deipist dougeon of the castel where thei suffred ful gret sorowe and wo eu*er*y nyght and al the day thei labored ful sore and had ful seldyn any mete or drynke. But this prynce Amyrand had a gret affeccioun to talke with gilbert beket and wolde aske hym of the Cristen feith of the rule of Englonde and bycause he was famylier with the prynce al his felowes ferde the better for his sake and in especial for thy prync*es* dought*er* louyd muche this gilbert. And in a tyme she seid to hym if he wolde wedde hir she wolde forsake al hir heritage and bycome cristen for his loue. And than she askid of hym of the rule of criste*n* feith and what shulde be ther rewarde atte laste ende. And he answerd and sad the blisse of heuene is ther rewarde. and than she askyd hi*m* where he dwellid. He seid in Englonde in the Cite of london. And than she seid to london wol I come for thi sake if thou wilte promyse to wedde me to thi wife. And than he made hir promyse so to do. But with in a while aftir he and his felowe by the puruyaunce of our lorde escapid oute of prison and come in to cristyndome in safte. And than this prynce Amyrand was ny mad for angre and sent his messengers aftir them but thei cowde not ou*er*take them as god wolde. And than they returned home ayene with sory chere. And this mayde the pr*i*nc*es* dought*er* herd this she was ful heuy and wepte ful sore. And in a nyght wha*n* she se hir tyme she went away alone and come in to many a wilde place and so many yeirs wanderyng aboute hedir and thedyr and euer she askyd aftir london. london, and beket. beket. for more englysshe coulde she not. And so atte last by the puruyaunce of oure lorde she come ou*er* see in to englonde and so forth to london and when she come ayenst the place where Gilbert Beket dwellid there seint Thomas of Akirs is nowe she stode ful there and many a sherewd boy wondryng upon hyr for she koude sey no thyng but london. londo*n*. & beket beket. Hit happid that Willia*m* gilbert bekett*es* man that was with hym while he was prisoner knewe this mayde and wente to his maister beket and tolde hym howe the prynces doughter Amyrand stode atte his dore and much people wonderyng on hir. And then he anone went to hir and when she se hym she fel asownyng and lay as she had be dede and than gilbert beket toke hir up and confortide hir in the beste wise he cowde and led hir into his howse and bade his men give hir mete and drynke. And in the mene tyme gilbert went to seint Poulys churche where ther were vi bishops atte that tyme. And then he tolde them of this wondyr how fer this hethyn maide was come and forsake al hir heritage and to bycome cristen for his sake if he wolde wedde hir. And then al these byshops m*ar*ueiled gretly of this thyng. And then the bishop of Chichester seid it was best that he shulde wedde hir and make hir a Cristen woman for it is thurgh the purvyance of god that she is so hyder come fro so fer contre. And then gilbert the next day brought hir to seint Poulys churche. And there the bishops met with hir and receyued hir worshipfully and askid hir if she wolde become cristen if Gilbert wolde wedde hir. And she seid ye forsoth ful fayne or else I wolde not haue had so moche trouble for his loue. ffor this I am come hider alone & forsake gret possessions and al for hym only. And when the Bishops undirstode hir gret stedfastnes and goode wille to receyue the feith off Crist then anone she was baptized with the ful assent of al the bishops and furthwith weddyde to the seid Gilbert to the seid Gilbert beket in the churche of Poulys with ful gret solempnyte for the gret myracle that oure lorde had shewid for that mariage and within shorte tyme after by the grace of oure lorde was bygotyn this holy childe sei*n*t Thomas. And then anone aftir this seid gilbert beket had gret desire to go ayene to the holy londe but al his care was for his wife bycause she was but late weddide and wiste not the langage of this londe. and was more sadder than he was wonte to be afore and tha*n* his wife was ful heuy and thought in hir conceyt that hir husbonde was displeysed with hir. And she seid to hym with mornyng chere. Sir whi be ye so heuy and he seid to hir for soth it is only for your sake for I am ful purposid to go ayene to the holy londe. And then she seid if it be goddis wille and yours it shal plese me for my wille is your wille but I prey you let Willyam your man abide he w$^{t}$ me to teche me the langage of this lande. And then he toke his leve of hir and wente forth to the holy londe. and was there iii yere and an half or he come home. And when he come ayene in to Englonde he hadde a sonne of feyre stature and his name hight Thomas and then he was ful glad and thonkid oure lorde a thousande tymes and made ful muche of his goode wife.

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[1] For description of the MS. see C. Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden, Neue Dolge*, (Heilbroun, 1881), p. cxxx, and Pierce Butler, *Legenda Aurea, Legènde Forée, Golden Legend* (Baltimore, 1899), pp. 65–66, 75, 147.

[2] The preceding is written in red; the words beginning "of seint" have been crossed out.

[3] Jerusalem.

## APPENDIX D

## MOTIFS IN THE LEGEND OF THE SARACEN PRINCESS AND LIST OF PARALLELS

(The most important motifs are starred. The numerals after each motif refer to the number of the tale or romance in the following list. Superior figures refer to notes at the end of this appendix.)

### Earliest Version

*1. A Christian hero is held in captivity by a Saracen prince. 4 5 11 12 13 15 16 17 21 23 24 28[1] 31 32 33bc 37 40 44b 49 50[2].

2. The hero gains special favor of his master. 23 26 27 29 40 46 47.

3. The master (emir, king, pirate chief, or captor) has a beautiful daughter. 1 2 3 5 6 7 8 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 23 24 26 27 29 31 32 33bc 37 44b 46 48 50.

4. The hero is interrogated about his native country or his religion or both. 1 5 23.

5. The hero is befriended by the Saracen heroine (or the daughter of the king or master). 1 3 5 7 11 12 13 14 15 17 20 21 23 24 28[1] 31 32 33ac 37 40.

6. The Saracen heroine falls in love with the Christian hero. 4 6 7 8 10 12 13 15 16[3] 17 18ab 19 20 21 22 23 24 30a 31 32 33a 35 40[3] 41 43 44ab 45b 50.

7. The Saracen heroine (or the princess) takes the initiative in love.3[4] 7 12 13 17 18ab 19 21 23 26 30a 31 32 39[5] 41 42 44a 46 47 50.

*8. The Saracen heroine promises to accept Christianity if the hero will accept her as his wife. 12 13 17 20 21 23 29 31 32 43.

9. The hero is reluctant to accept the proposal of the maiden. 12 13 23 26 39 41.

10. The hero escapes from his prison. 1 2 3 5 6 12 13 14 15 16 17 21 23 24 28 31 32 33b 49 50.

11. The hero is pursued in vain by troops of his former captor (or master). 32 48.

*12. The maiden follows (or goes in quest of) her lover over land or sea or both. 5 8 15 23 33a 34 35 40 44ab 45a 48 50.

13. The hero seeks ecclesiastical counsel concerning his marriage with the maiden. 23.

14. The Saracen maiden is baptized. 5 6 8 9[6] 12 13 16 17 18a 21 22 23 24 25 30b 31 32 33c 42 43 45b 50.

15. The hero and the foreign maiden are married. 3 6 8 12 13 15 16 17 18ab 21 22 23 24[7] 25 26 29 30b 31 32 33abc[8] 35 40[8] 42 43 44ab 45b 50.

16. Immediately after the marriage, the hero resolves to return to the East. 36 38.

### Later Contribution to the Legend

*17. The Saracen heroine promises to help the prisoner escape if he will accept her as his wife (Wade). $2^4$ $3^4$ 12 13 $16^9$ 17 21 32 $40^9$ 50.

18. The hero promises to wed the Eastern maiden (South English Legendary: Bodl. 14716; Legenda Aurea: English Translation). $2^4$ $3^4$ 12 13 17 21 23 26 29 31 32 43 50.

19. The hero makes a seven-year vow with the maiden to marry her Anonymous French Life), 27 50.

20. The Eastern maiden helps the hero to escape from prison (Festial). 1 $2^4$ $3^4$ 5 12 13 14 15 16 17 21 28 31 32 33b 50.

21. The Eastern maiden accompanies the hero in his flight (Biographie Universelle). $2^4$ $3^4$ 6 12 14 17 $25^{10}$ 32.

22. When the maiden follows (or goes in quest of) the hero, she takes precious jewels with her (Balan; Dickens). 40 48.

23. The captor tries to persuade the hero to turn heathen (Fraser's Magazine; L'Huillier). 23 24 28.

24. On his refusal, the chief decrees his death (Fraser). 24.

25. When the heroine arrives at the hero's door, she finds a wedding already in progress (South English Legendary: Bodl. 14716; Clark). 34 50.

## PARALLELS TO THE LEGEND OF THE SARACEN PRINCESS

(The numerals following the name of a tale or romance refer to the motifs involved.)

1. Tale 236 of the Arabian Nights 3 4 5 10 20.
2. Seneca's Sixth Controversia 3 10 $17^4$ $18^4$ $20^4$ $21^4$.
3. Fifth Tale of the Gesta Romanorum 3 5 $7^4$ 10 15 $17^4$ $18^4$ $20^4$ $21^4$.
4. Infantes de Lara 1 6.
5. The Legend of Bohemond's Release, in Ordericus Vitalis 1 3 4 5 10 12 14 20.
6. Graf Rudolph 3 6 10 14 15 21.
7. Mainet 3 5 6 7.
8. Charlemagne of Girard d'Amiens 3 6 12 14 15.
9. Chanson de Roland $14^6$.
10. Le Voyage de Charlemagne 6.
11. Les Enfances Ogier 1 3 5.
12. Huon de Bordeaux 1 3 5 6 7 8 9 10 14 15 17 18 20 21.
13. Fierabras 1 3 5 6 7 8 9 10 14 15 17 18 20.
14. Les Enfances Garin 3 5 10 20 21.
15. Hernant de Beaulande 1 3 5 6 10 12 15 20.
16. Guibert d'Andrenas 1 3 $6^3$ 10 14 15 $17^9$ 20.
17. La Prise de Cordres et de Saville 1 3 5 6 7 8 10 14 15 17 18 20 21.
18. Le Siege de Barbastre

    a. Girart and Malatrie 6 7 14 15.
    b. Guibert and Almarinde 6 7 15.
19. Beuve de Commarchis 6 7.
20. Les Enfances Guillaume 5 6 8.
21. Prise d'Orange 1 5 6 7 8 10 14 15 17 18 20.
22. Foulque de Candie 6 14 15.
23. Bevis of Hampton 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 12 13 14 15 18 23.
24. Elie de Saint Gille 1 3 5 6 10 14 15[7] 23 24.
25. Aiol 14 15 21[10]
26. King Horn 2 3 7 9 15 18.
27. Horn Child and Maiden Rimnald 2 3 19.
28. Orson de Beauvais 1[1] 5[1] 10 20 23.
29. Daurel et Beton 2 3 8 15 18.
30. Aspremont
    a. Naime and the Saracen Queen 6 7.
    b. Florent and Agoland's widow 14 15.
31. Gaufrey 1 3 5 6 7 8 10 14 15 18 20.
32. Floovant 1 3 5 6 7 8 10 11 14 15 17 18 20 21.
33. Florent et Octavian
    a. Florent and Marsebille 5 6 12 15.
    b. Octavian and Margalie 1 3 10 15 20.
    c. Othenet and Police 1 3 5 14 15[8].
34. Galerent 12 25.
35. Aucassin and Nicolette 6 12 15.
36. Guy of Warwick 16.
37. Reinbrun 1 3 5.
38. Emare 16.
39. Raoul de Cambrai 7[5] 9.
40. Baudouin de Sebourg 1 2 5 6[3] 12 15[8] 17[9] 22.
41. Le Bastars de Bouillon 6 7 9.
42. Ciperis de Vignevaux 7 14 15.
43. Valentin and Orson 6 8 14 15 18.
44. Generydes
    a. Auferius and Sereyne 6 7 12 15.
    b. Generydes and Clarionas 1 3 6 12 15.
45. Ysaie le Triste
    a. Ysaie and Martha 12.
    b. Marc and Orimonda 6 14 15.
46. King Ponthus and the Fair Sidone 2 3 7.
47. Amis et Amiles 2 7.
48. L'Escoufle 3 11 12 22.

49. Otinel 1 10.
50. The ballad of Bekie, Beichan, Bondwell, or Bichet 1 3 6 7 10 12 14 15 17 18 19 20 25.

## NOTES

[1] Guinemand and Milon are befriended and delivered from prison by the wife of their jailor.

[2] According to 7 versions.

[3] In this case, the son of the prisoner.

[4] The daughter of the pirate chief.

[5] The heroine is the daughter of a French baron.

[6] The Saracen queen is baptized.

[7] According to the Norse version.

[8] The Saracen heroine marries the son of the hero.

[9] The Saracen princess promises to deliver the prisoner if he will give her his son in marriage.

[10] Aiol kidnaps the princess Mirabel and carries her to France.

# APPENDIX E

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# INDEX

A

À Beckett, Gilbert Abbott, 49.
Abbott, Edwin A., 11nff.
Abingdon, Sir Edmund, 234, 236.
Abraham and Sarah, 176.
Acon (or Acre), capture of, 66; Becket's mother said to have been born at, 67.
Adenes li Rois, *Beuves di Commarcis*, 56n, 276.
Aegidius, St., 108.
Affonso, Diogo, 280.
Agincourt, Battle of, 230, 231n, 236.
Agnes of Cornwall, 186.
*Aiol*, 59, 276.
Ailward of Westoning, 167–68.
Alan of Tewkesbury, 10, 11, 86.
Albert, cardinal, 147n.
Alexander III, Pope, 120, 143, 157, 158. (See Pope).
Alexander, Mrs. Francis, 39n, 82n, 283.
Alexander of Metz, 65n.
Alexis, St., 62n.
Alfred of Gloucester, 164.
Allen, Thomas, 40n, 42n, 67n.
Almarinde, 57, 276.
Alms, giving of, to effect a cure, 187; miraculously provided, 176; miraculously returned, 176.
Altars dedicated to St. Thomas, 209.
*Amis et Amiles*, 276.
*Analecta Bollandiana*, 285.
Anfelise, 57.
Anon. I (the anonymous author sometimes called "Roger of Pontigny"), 9, 10n, 15n, 24n, 75n, 77n, 78n, 80, 91n, 96–7, 105, 118n, 155n, 255n.
Anon. II, 10, 15n, 121n, 155n, 255n.
Anon. IV, 255n.
Anon. V, 140n, 155n, 157.
Anon. X, 124, 155n, 185n, 255n.
Anselm, a monk of Reading, 180.
Antoninus of Florence, St., 94, 112n, 127n, 163n, 179n, 192n.
*Arabian Nights*, 51, 70, 275.
Arnold of Lubeck, 88.
Arras, traditions of, respecting St. Thomas, 217.
Arthur, King, 7, 25.
Arundel, Archbishop Thomas, 23, 228.
*Aspremont*, 60, 276.
Astle, Thomas, 208n.
*Aucassin and Nicolette*, 62, 276.
Aufelise, 60.
Augaiete, 55, 56.
Augustine, St., 250.
Austin of London, 182.
Austin the monk, 204.
Avignon, prophecy concerning, 233
Axon, W. E. A., 205n.

B

B., A., *The Life or the Ecclesiasticall Historie of S. Thomas*, 143n, 280.
Babe, a, sings *Kyrie Eleison*, 183.
Baigent, F. J., 120n.
Baillet, Adrien, 38, 283.
Baker, A. T., 283.
Baker, Sir R., 139n.
Balan, Pietro, 42n, 275, 280.
Bale, John, 251.
Bapaume, tradition that Becket was born at, 209–10.
Barclay, A., 37, 282.
Baring-Gould, S., 40n, 42n, 283.
Baronius, Caesar, 144, 158n, 223, 283.
Barroud, C. W., 84n, 212n.
Bartholemew, Bishop of Exeter 199.
*Bastars de Bouillon, Le*, 63, 276.
Bataille, C., 40, 41, 280.
Bataille, Jean, La Legende Dorée, 94n, 127n, 179n, 279.
Battely, 122.
*Baudouin de Sebourg*, 62, 276.
Beauchief Abbey, 207.
Beaulieu, Luke de, 38, 43n, 280.
Beauvais, traditions connected with, 211.
Becchetti, Signori, 223.
Becker, Ph. Aug., 56n.
Becket, Agnes, 222, 223.
Becket, Allard, 25.
Becket, Anselm, 47.
Becket, Edmund, 26.
Becket, Gilbert, birth, 14; traditions of birth, 26, 211; sheriff of London, 15; legend of, and the Saracen Princess, 29–74; legend concerning his visit to his son at Merton, 78.
Becket, Giovan' Battista, 222.
Becket, Jean and Pierre, 222.
Becket, Mary, 222.

Becket, Rohesia or Roesa, sister of Thomas, 222.
Becket, Thomas, correct name, 14n; not of Saxon or Oriental descent, 26–7; birth, 14, 31, 75–6; legends concerning birth in France, 209-10; childhood, 15, 76–8, 257; youth, 15, 77–81, 206, 257; narrow escape from drowning, 206; chancellor, 15–16, 26, 82–4; archbishop, 16, 26, 84–107; exile, 17, 21, 86–92, 99–104, 209, 212, 220–21, 226; death, 17, 24–5, 97, 108–25, 136, 152, 259–61; supernatural manifestations after death, 122–35; appearance of body after death, 125–26; death revealed by visions and miracles, 127–35; canonization, 132, 158; the mock trial, 238–44; disposition of the bones, 244–54; recent excavations associated with Becket, 254–56; churches said to have been dedicated by, 214; directs dedication of churches to himself, 212–13; lives, 8–14, 18, 37–8, 195, 278–83; letters, 8; character, 24, 27, 260–61; fame, 20, 23; influence, 22; in fiction and drama, 13, 44, 49–50; shrine, 19; statue of, 21; relatives, 210–11, 221–23; palace at West Tarring, 204–5; brewhouse at West Tarring, 205n; fig tree planted by, 205; introduces fig trees into Sussex, 205. *See also* St. Thomas, Legend, Traditions, Miracles, Prophecies, Visions, Haircloth Garments, and Relics.
Becquet (surname), 209, 210.
Beer caused to ferment, 183.
Bekie ballads (*Lord Beichen*, *Young Bekie*, etc.), 34, 64–5, 72–4, 277.
Belet, Jean, 279.
Bell, Mrs. Arthur, 40n, 42n.
Bells baptized in honor of St. Thomas, 209.
Benedict, St., 118, 119.
Benedict of Peterborough, 9, 11, 14n, 24n, 67, 88, 98, 108, 117n, 122, 126, 129, 131, 134, 155n, 156, 158, 159, 161n, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 174n, 175n, 177n, 188, 189, 196, 198n, 199, 202, 224, 255, 257, 278; collection of Miracles, 9, 68, 88, 158, 159, 168, 169, 257; *Passio*, 9, 11; he silences dogs by the name of St. Thomas, 180.
Benet, Frere (Benoit de Sainte Maur), 278.
Benson, Robert Hugh, 280.
Berart de Montdidier, 60.
Berceo, Gonzalo de, 95n.
Berington, Joseph, 12, 39.
Besant, Sir Walter, 176n.
*Bevis of Hamtoun*, 57–8, 65n, 69, 70, 276.
Bezant, a, preserved by St. Thomas, 165.
*Biographie Universelle*, 40n, 42n, 275.
Black, W. H., 73n, 225n, 232n, 279.
"Black Mountain, Church of," 146.
Black Prince, 228, 235.
Blasphemy against St. Thomas punished, 161; unpunished, 164.
Blindness, cures of, 123, 156, 159, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167–8, 178–79, 184, 185, 186; partial cure, 161; pretended blindness punished, 164.
Blood of St. Thomas, healing by means of, 167, 168, 184, 192.
Bohemond's Release, Legend of, 52–3, 71, 275.
Bonizo, 85n.
Bossuet, Jacques Benigne, 283.
Bouchet, 227.
Bourbourg, supposed visit of Becket to, 215–16.
Boussingault, 216n.
Brandin, Louis, 60n.
Brandl, A., 233n, 236, 237, 285.
Bridlington, Canon, 225.
Brito (le Breton), Richard, 17, 115, 119, 146, 153.
Broc, Robert de, 98, 139n, 204.
Brocs, the De, 116, 155.
Brompton, John, 45, 139n, 141n; *Chronicle*, 12, 28, 47, 278.
Brown, Carleton, 133n.
Browne, Sir Thomas, 204n.
Brunaeus, Ricardus, 280.
Bucelinus, 222.
Bucer, Martin, 243.
Buchanan, Robert, 46.
Buchon, J. A., 227, 228.
Burd, Isabel, 47.
Burghley, Lord Cecil, 254.
Burnet, Gilbert, 239n, 253n.
Burton, Thomas de, 174n.
Bushell, W. Done, 280.
Buss, Franz Joseph, 280.
Butler, Alban, 12, 139n, 143n, 158n, 271n.

Butler, Pierce, 279, 284.
Butlers, Earls of Ormond, 223.
Buzelin, Jean, 210.

C

Caen, Becket's mother born at, 15.
Caesarius of Heisterbach, 93, 179n.
Cahier, Charles, 120n, 129n.
Calabria, Tracy's stay in, 147; legend of Tracy's death in, 153.
Camden, William, 149n, 206.
Campbell, Lord, 243.
Campion, Edmund, 223.
Candle, offering of, 187; measuring for, 187.
Candles, miracles relating to, 126, 160, 181.
Canterbury Cathedral, crypt compared to pool of Bethesda, 188; legends associated with, 201–3; praying towards, 190.
Canterbury pilgrimage, 22 (see also Pilgrimage).
Canterbury Water, see Water of Canterbury.
Capgrave, John, 37n, 279.
Capon, leg of, turned into carp, 87–88.
Cardevacque, A. de, 210.
Carle, T., 284.
Carlier, Abbe, 209, 210, 213n.
Carlier, J. J., 210, 216n, 217n, 218n, 285.
Carpenter, John, 21n.
Carte, Thomas, 138n.
Cartwright, Julia, 203n.
Castelnau, 245.
Catherine, St., 150.
Catherine of Bologna, 195.
Cato, paralleled with St. Thomas, 109.
Cattermole, Richard, 84n.
Caxton, William, *The Golden Legend*, 12, 36, 37, 88, 94n, 98, 112n, 127n, 128, 163n, 166n, 179, 191, 192n, 280, 282.
"Chair, Becket's," at Kenchester, 206–7.
Challoner, Bishop Richard, 12, 38, 39n, 283.
Chambers, Robert, 72n.
Chapel, commands to build, to St. Thomas, 194–95.
Charlemagne, 60; Cycle of, 53–5.
Charles VI, King of France, 231, 233–35.
Charles VII, King of France, 236.
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 225.
Cheapside, London, the birthplace of Thomas Becket, 14, 67.
Cheese, lost, miraculously found, 196.
Chevalier, Ulysse, 285.
Chichester, Bishop of, 31, 33, 59.
Child, Francis J., 59, 64n, 65n, 73.
Christ Church, Canterbury, 147; name changed to St. Thomas Church, 19, 20; Letter Books of, 192, 193.
*Chronica Slavorum*, 89.
Church consecrated by Becket after his death, 194.
Churches dedicated by, or to, Becket, 211–14.
*Church Quarterly Review*, 209.
*Ciperis de Vignevaux*, 63, 276.
Clarendon, Council of, 9, 16; traditions of, 206.
Clarionas, 64, 276.
Clarisse de Somerighem, 216.
Clark, Isabella Golding, 47–9, 71, 74, 275.
Clay, R. M., 67n.
Clement, Felix, 214n, 223n.
Clerimond, 63.
Clerks, controversy over criminous, 16.
Clovis, 60, 227.
Cola, Giovanni Battista, 195, 221, 223, 281.
Colchester, Becket's visit to, 208.
Colliette, Louis-Paul, 209, 210n, 213n.
Cologne, legend of the visit of Becket's murderers to, 145.
Colonia, 212n.
Constance, Council of, 243.
Corblet, J., 158, 210n, 211n, 214n, 217n.
Corner, Herman, 79n, 112n, 127, 131n; *Chronicle*, 78, 90n, 91, 94, 182n.
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University, 35n, 269.
Cosenza, De Tracy's traditional stay at, 145, 146.
*Cosmopolitan*, 49n.
"Cottages, Thomas à Becket's," 205.
Coulton, G. G., 23n.
Cournier, J. M., 138n, 281.
Courtenay, William, Archbishop of Canterbury, 192.
Courteney, William de, 144.

Courtney, Sir Gervaise, 145.
Covel, John, 204.
Cows, miracles upon, 180.
Coxe, J. C., 206.
Craib, Theodore, 285.
Crepy, Becket directs the dedication of a church at, 213–14.
Crequi, Sire de, 65n.
Croke, W. J. D., 220n.
Cromwell, Thomas, 240, 243n, 246, 247, 253.
Crookhorn (or Crewkerne) Cave, supposed hiding place of De Tracy, 148.
Cross, commands to erect a, 194–5.
Crusades, 17, 40, 45, 72.
Cunnington, Susan, 40n, 43n, 281.
Cures, in places sanctified by St. Thomas, 188; partial, 191; revoked, 191–92.
Cuthbert, St., 249, 251.

D

Daffen, Rev. T. F., 150n.
Damianus, Petrus, 96.
Daras, E., 38n.
Darboy, George, 281.
Dark, Sidney, 281.
Darley, George, 44, 121n.
Darsy, M., 210, 215n.
*Daurel et Beton*, 60, 276.
David II of Scotland, 235.
Dawson, Edward, 38n.
Deafness, healing of, 159, 166, 167, 168.
Death granted, 182.
Death, miraculous savings from, (see Preservation of Life), 160, 173.
Death, restoration from, 160, 166, 167, 171–73, 178, 184, 191.
Deladrue, Abbé, 211.
De Magistris, Alessandro, 220.
Demimuid, Mgr., 13, 39n, 40, 281.
Demoniacs, healing of, 160, 167, 170.
Denis, St., 117, 170.
Derbyshire, traditions of, 207.
Derby, Thomas, 248, 252.
Derode, Victor, 218.
De Ruyter, Michael, 232.
Destombes, C. J., 210, 215, 283.
Deutschbein, Max, 53n.
De Vere, Aubrey, 13, 14, 44, 78n, 121n.
Devonshire, legends of, 127–28, 146, 148–51, 153.
Diceto, Ralph de, 11, 66, 118n, 141n, 278.
Dickens, Charles, 42, 275.
*Dictionary of National Biography*, 29n, 65n.
Dimock, James F., 128n, 194n, 278.
Dixon, James Henry, 73.
Dommartin (Dampmartin), abbey of, 194, 217; miracles at, 158, 181n.
Doon de Maience, 60.
Dove sent by St. Thomas, 180.
Dropsy, healing from, 160, 166, 170–71, 184, 191.
Drowning, rescues from, 174–75; resuscitation after, 178.
Du Boys, Albert, 42n, 284, 286.
Du Canda, Charles, 159, 181n, 195n, 281.
Dugdale, *Monasticon*, 14n, 144n, 207n.
Dumbness cured, 123, 159, 166, 167, 168.
Dunlop, John, 64n.
Dyboski, R., 118n.

E

Edmund, St., 174, 192; life of, 184; visions of St. Thomas, 198–99.
Edward the Confessor, 245.
Edward II, 144n, 235.
Edward III, 226, 229, 235–37.
Edward VI, King of England, 201, 249.
Eilward (or Ailward) of Westonning, healing of, 171, 185n.
Elias, a monk of Evesham, compiler of the *Early Quadrilogus*, 11.
*Elie de Saint Gille*, 58–9, 69, 71, 276.
Elienor, in *Baudouin de Sebourg*, 63.
Elizabeth, Queen of England, 25.
Ellendorf, Johann Otto, 286.
Elwes, D. G. C., 205n.
*Emare*, 62, 276.
Emma of Halberton, 164, 198.
England, deliverance of, prophesied, 196.
England, traditions in, 201–9.
*English Conquest of Ireland, The*, 279.
Epileptics, healing of, 160, 166, 171, 190–91.
Erasmus, Desiderius, 23, 67n, 120, 208.
*Erkenwald*, 233.
Erimine, 60.
Esclarmonde, 54–5.

Esther, the Saracen Princess compared to, 49.
Etienne the Martyr, St., 213n.
Etienne, M., 284.
Eulogium Historiarum sive Temporis, 227, 279.
Eustace, St., 68.
Eustace, monk, author of life of St. Edmund, 184.
Exeter, healing of the bishop of, 170, 177.
Eyes, miraculous restoration of, 171.

F

Fagius, Paul, 243.
Fair, St. Thomas', 20.
Falcon's eye and man's eye miraculously exchanged, 179.
Fantosme, Jordan, 136n.
Felice, 62.
Fermin, physician of Canterbury, visions of, 110–12.
Ferrer, St. Vincent, 94, 114n, 127n, 163n, 179n.
Fever, healing from, 160, 166, 167, 170.
*Fierabras*, 55, 71, 275.
Fitzranulph, Robert, 207.
Fitzstephen, William, 11, 14n, 15, 18n, 24, 76, 77n, 78, 81n, 83, 87, 96, 101, 102, 110n, 114n, 116n, 117, 124, 134, 155, 156, 188, 204, 207n, 255; biography, 8, 257.
Fitz-Thedmar, Arnold, *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, 176.
Fitz-Urse, Reginald, 17, 24, 115, 116, 144, 259; probably struck the first blow at the Martyr, 25, 117, 120, 136, 177; legends, 145–46, 152, 153.
Flahault, R., 286.
Flamand, Charles L., 281.
Flanders, traditions of, concerning fate of the murderers, 142, 145–46; connected with the visit of the Archbishop, 215–20.
Flat Holms, the "unknown graves" in the, 144–45.
Flechier, Esprit, 220.
Fleming, Bishop, 251.
Fleurdepine, 60.
Fleury, M., 281.
*Floovant*, 60–1, 276.
*Florence of Worcester, Chronicle of*, 158n.
*Florent et Octavian*, 61, 276.
*Flores Historiarum*, 12, 124–25 135n, 136n, 139n, 279.
Floripas, 55.
*Flos Sanctorum*, 38n, 283.
Flugel, Ewald, 37n, 118n.
Foliot, Gilbert, 100n, 104, 167.
Foss, Edward, 138n.
*Foulque de Candie*, 57, 276.
Foxe, John, 243n, 252n.
France, traditions in, 209–20.
*Fraser's Magazine*, 45n, 71, 275.
Freeman, Edward A., 26n, 284.
Fregonde, 55.
Frêne, 62.
Froissart, Jean, 227; *Chroniques*, 227n, 228n.
Froude, James Anthony, 281.
Froude, Richard Hurrell, 72n, 281.
Fuller, Thomas, 121n, 147n, 152n, 206.

G

*Galerent*, 62, 276.
Gander, a, resuscitated, 180.
Garin de Montglane, 55, 60.
*Gaufrey*, 60, 276.
Gautier, Leon, 54n, 55n, 57n, 60.
Gautier, de Coincy, 95n.
*Generydes*, 63, 276.
*Gentleman's Magazine*, 209n.
Geoffrey, brother of Henry II, 15.
Geoffrey, Prior, 224.
Gerhard, 65n.
Gerould, Gordon Hall, 12, 38n, 284.
Gervase of Canterbury, 11, 99n, 104n, 114n, 116, 118, 135n, 136n, 138n, 157, 199n, 255, 278.
*Gesta Romanorum*, 52, 71, 275.
"Ghost, Becket's," 203.
Gilbert, John Thomas, 19n.
Giles, J. Allen, 9, 12n, 28n, 159, 195n, 215, 278, 281.
Gilson, J. P., 226n, 229n, 230n.
Giraldus Cambrensis, 11, 101n, 112, 127, 139, 140, 197; *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 18n; *Opera*, 128n, 130n, 182n, 194n, 278.
Girard d'Amiens, *Charlemagne*, 54, 275.
Girart de Comarchis, 56.
Gloriande, 54.
Gloucestershire, descendants of Tracy in, 138; traditions, 146 151–52.
Godescard, 39n, 41n, 283.
Godric, St., 112, 129.

Godwin, Morgan, *Annals of England*, 254.
*Golden Legend*, *see* Caxton, William.
Goldsmith, Oliver, 40n.
Gosse, P. H., 148n.
*Graf Rudolph*, 53, 275.
Grafton, Richard, 204.
Grandison, John, Bishop of Exeter, 36, 96, 141; *Vita beati Thomae Martyris*, 11, 34–5, 269–70.
Graves, M., 210.
Gregory XVI, Pope, 223.
Gribble, J. B., 151n.
Grim, Edward, 9, 11, 15n, 25n, 29, 75, 76, 77n, 79n, 80, 87, 97, 100–02, 114, 116, 118, 140n, 156, 255; life, 9, 28; wounded in defending Becket, 17, 117; miraculous healing of arm, 123–24; other legends, 119, 121, 136, 260.
Grim, Pseudo-, 90n.
Grose, Francis, 208n.
Günther, Otto, 286.
Guernes du Pont-Sainte-Maxence (Garnier), 9n, 24n, 75n, 76n, 79, 82, 87, 90–1, 97, 99–100, 102, 104, 114n, 115, 116, 117n, 118, 121, 133n, 156n, 188n, 255n; *Vie de Saint Thomas*, 10, 64n, 68, 278.
Gui, Bernard, 251.
Gui de Bourgogne, 55.
*Guibert d'Andrenas*, 55–6, 275.
Guillaume II de Bomy, 158.
Guizot, M., 214n.
Gunnsteinsson, Berg, 11.
*Guy of Warwick*, 62, 276.

H

Haircloth garments of Thomas Becket, discovery of, 126, 155–56, 260; legends about, 91–6.
Hajji, 281.
Hall, Edward, *Chronicle*, 252n.
Halphen, Louis, 284.
Hamilton, Alexander, 44.
Hanging, deliverance from, 175.
Harding, Lieut, Col., 150n.
Hardy, Thomas Duffus, 28n, 286.
Hardyng, Iohn, *Chronicle*, 279.
Hare, A. J. C., 214n, 222n.
Harold, son of Godwin, 115.
Harper, Sydney, 149n.
Harpsfield, Nicholas, 239, 246, 249–50.
Hasted, Edward, 203n.
Hawks miraculously recovered, 179–80.
Heath, Sidney, 22n, 140n.
Heigham, John, 38n, 139n, 283.
Henriquez, Chrysostomo, *Phoenix Reviviscens*, 240–43.
Henry IV, emperor, 85n.
Henry II, king of England, 15–18, 21, 26, 66, 69, 99, 120n, 138n, 143, 149, 153, 173, 207n, 208, 223, 225–26, 239, 241; contest with Thomas Becket, 16–17; penance at the tomb of the Martyr, 135–36, 178; legends, 82–4, 86; visions concerning, 102–5, 111, 197–98.
Henry III, king of England, 152, 196.
Henry IV, king of England, 119, 228, 231.
Henry V, king of England, 228, 231.
Henry VIII, king of England; destruction of Becket's shrine, 23; mock trial attributed to, 238–44; disposal of Becket's bones, 244–54.
Henry, first Duke of Lancaster, 228.
Henry of Brunswick, 65n.
Henry, son of Henry II, 135, 178.
Herbert of Bosham, 9, 11,14n, 76n, 78n, 84–5, 87, 88, 91n, 99, 100, 102–4, 106n, 114, 116n, 118, 125, 129, 134, 139, 140n, 143, 146, 147n, 156, 255; date and character of his biography, 9.
*Hernant de Beaulande*, 55, 275.
Herolt, Johannes, 94.
Heywood, Thomas, 108n.
Higden, Ralph, *Polychronicon*, 12, 279.
Hilary of Chichester, 100n, 104.
Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII), 85n.
Hilliard, Richard, 241–42.
Hippeau, C., 59, 68, 71, 211n, 278.
*Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 56n, 57n, 59n, 60n, 61n, 63n.
Holinshed, 139n, 204n, 247; *Chronicles*, 114n, 121n.
Holland, war between England and, 232.
Honesty rewarded by St. Thomas, 181.
Hook, Walter F., 26; *Lives of the Archbishops*, 21n, 205n, 281.
Hope, Mrs., *Life of St. Thomas*, 281.
Hope, W. H. St. John, 208.
*Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, 59, 65n, 276.
Horner, Susan and Joanna, 221n.

Horse miraculously recovered when lost, 177.
Horses, miracles upon, 180.
Horsfield, T. W., 205n.
Horstmann, Carl, 12n, 32n, 33n, 36n, 37n, 75n, 130n, 233, 271n, 279, 280.
Hoveden, Roger de, 11, 12, 88, 126n, 129, 139, 142n, 143–44, 174n, 204; *Chronica*, 141n, 145n, 278.
Hubert, St., 68.
Hugh, St., 194, 251.
Hugh of Horsea, 17.
Hundred Years' War, 230–31, 235–36.
*Huon de Bordeaux*, 54–5, 71, 275.
Hutton, William Holden, 8n, 9n, 13, 14n, 15n, 66, 117n, 119, 159n, 207n, 243n, 248, 252, 255, 256, 281–82.

I

Iceland, fame of Becket in, 21–2.
Ignace, Ioseph, 209.
Il Libro d'Oro, 38n, 39, 41–2, 82n, 283.
Ilfracombe, legend of, 148–49.
*Infantes de Lara*, 52, 275.
Insanity cured (*see* Madness), 163.
Iperius, Johannes, 86n, 119n.
Ireland, a tradition of, 152–53.
Irmengart, 53.
Isabella of France, 235.

J

Jacob, St., 108.
Jaeger, Felix, 7n, 284.
James, M. R., 269n.
Jameson, Mrs., 21n.
Jenkins, Alexander, 20n.
Jerrold, Douglas, 44.
Jerusalem, how the martyrdom became known at, 129.
Jesus, attempts to draw parallel between Becket and, 18, 110, 115–16, 125, 136–37, 157; miracles paralleled, 166ff, parallel between Crucifixion and martyrdom of Becket, 124, 126, 136; attempts to parallel the Resurrection, 134–36, 199.
Joan of Arc, 231.
Joanna, daughter of Henry II, 21.
Jocelin, Bishop of Bath, 144n.
John, King of England, 152.
John II, King of France, 235.
John the Baptist, 45, 46, 166.
John, Bishop of Exeter (*see* Grandison, John).
John of Bridlington, 225.
John, Duke of Burgundy, 230.
John, Bishop of Poitiers, 181.
John of Salisbury, 9, 11, 14n, 18, 118, 121, 140, 167, 255; protests the attitude of Becket toward the knights, 117; date and character of his biography, 9.
John of Tynemouth, 37n.
Jortin, John, 66, 67n.
Josian, 58, 70.
Josias, 251.
*Journal für Deutschland*, 281.
Judicial combats, St. Thomas intervenes in, 165–66, 175.

K

*Kalendre of the New Legende of England*, 37.
Kentish men born with tails, 204.
*King Horn*, 59, 276.
*King Ponthus and the Fair Sidone* 276.
Kingsford, C. L., 28.
Kinsman, W. and E., 38.
Kjellman, Hilding, 94n, 95.
Knight, Charles, 40n, 42n, 43.
Knight, H. G., 212n.
Knight, Samuel, 66, 67n.

L

Lambarde, William, 204n.
Lambert, Agnes, 284.
Lamb restored to life, 180.
Lameness, cures of, 159, 166–69, 193.
La Motte au Bois, tradition of, 217–18.
Lansdowne, MS., 142, 153.
Laurence, St., 131.
Learning miraculously manifested by ignorant people, 183.
Leather, Ella Mary, 207n.
Lecomte, Abbé, 213n.
Legend of Becket, sources of the, 8–13; growth of the, 7–8, 13, 25–27, 257–58; characteristics and summary of the, 257–61; the Becket of legend contrasted with the historic figure, 7, 14–27.
*Legenda Aurea*, 94, 127n, 163n, 166n, 179n, 192n, 279; anonymous English translation, 36, 64n, 87, 275, 280; English versions, 50, 280.

Legends, *see* Miracles, Prophecies, Visions, and Becket, Thomas.
Le Marchant, Jehan, 95n.
Leonora, Princess, 21.
Leprosy, healing of, 159, 166, 167, 169–70, 191.
Le Roux de Lincy, 284.
*L'Escoufle*, 276.
*Les Enfances Garin*, 55, 275.
*Les Enfances Guillaume*, 57, 276.
*Les Enfances Ogier*, 54, 275.
Le Vasseur, Jacques, 209.
Lewis, John, 244n.
L'Huillier, A., 41, 212, 216, 217n, 220, 222n, 223n, 224, 282.
Lille, traditions concerning Becket's stay at, 218.
Lilly, William, 229n, 232.
Lingard, John, 243.
Lisieux, traditional visit of Becket to, 214–15.
Littleton, W., 232.
Lockhart, Charles, 43.
Lollardism, 192n.
Lollards, 22
London, Bishop of, 31, 38, 58, 113.
London, St. Thomas honored in, 20–1; Tower of, 196–97.
Longstaff, G. B., 150n.
*Lord Bateman*, 73.
*Lord Beichen*, 64.
Lost articles miraculously recovered, 160, 177–78.
Lost members, restoration of, 160.
Louis VII, king of France, 89, 91, 177, 182.
Louis XIV.
Lucan, 109.
Lucas, E. V., 205n.
Lyons, tradition that Becket lived at, 215; dedication of a chapel at, 212.
Lysons, 138n.
Lyttelton, George, 19n, 26.

M

McKeehan, Irene Pettit, 62n, 69, 71.
M'Mahon family, 152.
Mackintosh, Sir James, 40, 41.
Mackaye, Percy, 19n, 202n.
Macray, W. D., 20n, 286.
Madan, F., 262n.
Madden, Sir Frederic, 139n, 245n, 278.
Madness, cures of (*see* Insanity), 160, 161, 166, 170, 173.
Magdalen College, 20.
Magnusson, E., 8n, 9, 21–2, 75n, 79n, 104n, 117n, 278.
Mahomet of the Jewes, 225.
Mahomet of the Panimes, 225.
*Mainet*, 53, 275.
Maitland, William, 38n.
Malatrie, 56, 276.
Malling Abbey, legends of, 140–41.
Manning, Robert, of Brunne, 204, 279.
Margalie, 61, 276.
Margaret, St., 150.
Marsebille, 61, 276.
Martène, E., and U. Durand, 216–17; *Thesaurus Novus Anecdoturum*, 119n, 283; *Voyage Litteraire*, 216n.
Martha, in *Ysaie le Triste*, 64, 276.
Martin, P., the hermit, 210.
Martin V, Pope, 251.
Mary, St., the Holy Virgin, 117, 144; altar of, 118–19, 168; appears to Becket, 234–35; brings him a casket containing bishop's ornaments, 78–9; brings him a red chasuble, 129n; gives him the keys to heaven, 258–59; gives him an unction for anointing kings, 226–27; vision of St. Thomas with, 131.
Mary Magdelene, St., 150.
Mason, Dr. A. J., 12n, 118n, 202n, 203n, 238–56.
Matilda (Machilde or Mahalt), mother of Thomas Becket (*see* also Rohesia or Roesa), 15n, 49, 75–8; Matildis, 38.
Matthew of Westminster (see *Flores Historiarum*), 279.
Mauclerc (*see* Hugh of Horsea), 120.
Maugalie, 60–1.
May, Thomas, 139n.
Mebes, A., 284.
Mechlin, legend of Becket's murderers in, 145.
Melaz, 52–3.
Members of the body, restoration of, 165, 171.
Mendham, J., 282.
Merlin, 108n, 225.
Meyer, Konrad Ferdinand, 13, 26n, 27n, 44, 74.
Michel, Emile, 214n.
Mielot, Jean, 95.
Migne, J. P., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, 28n, 96n, 226n, 229, 278; *Patrologiae Latinae*, 180n.

Mignot, Abbe Etienne, 282.
Miller, Thomas, 27n, 44.
Milman, Henry Hart, 282.
Milman, Henry Salusbury, 243, 244, 246n, 247, 249, 250n.
Minerbetti, F. Andrea, 221–22.
Minerbetti, Tommaso and Ruggieri, 221.
Mirabel, 59, 277.
Miracles of St. Thomas, 18, 25, 123–29, 154–200, 257–61; beginning of miracles prophesied, 196; the first miracle, 156, 188; miracles immediately following the martyrdom, 122–27; growth of the miracles, 157; exceed in number those recorded in the Bible, 159, 200, 258; classification of the miracles, 159–60; miracles of punishment, 159, 160–64; miracles of reward, 159, 165; miracles of poetic justice, 159, 165; imitative miracles (parallels to Biblical miracles), 159–60, 166–67; 200, 260; conditional miracles (healing contingent upon obedience to a command), 160, 176–77, 184–85; miracles of coincidence, 160, 177–78; miracles of losing and finding, 160, 177–78; miracles probably due to natural causes, 160, 178–79; emotional shock as possible explanation of miracles, 172, 178; doubtful miracles, 171–72, 178; whimsical miracles, 160, 179–83; miracles upon animals, 179–81; miracles with candles, 126, 160, 181; means employed in the miracles, 184–91; miracles occurring as a result of a vision, 183–85, 193–94; list of the Saint's miracles produces cure, 184; picture of the martyrdom produces miracles, 184; garments of St. Thomas work miracles, 184; miracles produced in places sanctified by St. Thomas, 188.
Mirk, John, *Festial*, 35, 50, 71, 72, 75n, 84, 130n, 139n, 143, 179n, 192n, 275, 280.
Money miraculously provided or returned, 176; offered for healing, 186–87; why St. Thomas accepts money, 187.
Montault, Barbier de, 220n.
Montmorency, 245.
More, Thomas, 40n.
Moringer, 65n.
Morris, Richard, 133n.
Morris, John, 28n, 88, 206n, 212n, 219, 223, 227, 246n, 282.
Morris, Richard, 133n.
Mortehoe, legends of, 148–51.
Morville, Hugh de, 17, 44, 121n, 141, 146; interpretation of name, 115; lived until 1199, 138; tradition that he fled into Scotland, 152–53.
Morwil, Sir Hugh, founder of the monastery of Kilwinning, 153–54.
"Mosque of the Rock," 144n.
Mottley, John (Robert Seymour), 38n.
Müller, Adalbert, 39, 42.
Murderers of Thomas Becket, names, 17, 115; meaning of names, 115; legends concerning their plot against the Archbishop, 115–16; later life, 138; legends of their fate, 139–53; flee into Scotland, 141–42; their supposed pilgrimage, 142–44; traditional places of burial, 143–46, 153; Flanders tradition, 145–46; three murderers represented in sculpture, 120.
Murray, *Handbook for North Italy*, 222n.
Mussafia, *Studien zu den Mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden*, 95n.

N

Naaman, the leper, 176.
Natalibus, Petrus de, 94, 112n, 127n.
Newcourt, R., *Repertorium*, 38.
Newington, miracles at, 167n, 188.
New Testament, parallels to miracles in, 159–60, 166–74.
Nicholas, St., 174.
Nichols, J. G., 23n, 67, 138n.
Noirlieu, Mart. de, 282.
Norgate, Kate, 14n, 28, 65.
Normandy, loss of, 229; Henry V's conquest of, 236.
Northampton, Council of, 9, 16, 105, 107; Becket's flight from, 105, 206, 213.
Northcote, Lady Rosalind, 147n, 149n.
*North English Homily Collection*, 72, 280.
*Notes and Queries*, 20n, 21n, 144, 145n, 148n, 151, 153, 208n.

*Nova Legenda Angliae*, 27, 12, 280.
Nubie, 56.
Nun protected by St. Thomas from rain, 182.

O

Offerings for healing, 186–87.
Offspring miraculously given, 160.
Ogier, 54, 55.
Old Testament, parallels to miracles, in, 160, 175–77.
Oliver, 54, 55.
*Once a Week*, 46n.
Orable, 57.
Ordeal, St. Thomas delivers men in, 175.
Ordericus Vitalis, 52, 71, 275.
Orimonda, 64, 276.
Orionde Galienne, 53–4.
Orleans, visions of the clerk of, 109–10, 112n.
Ormund, Earl of, 26.
*Orson de Beauvais*, 60, 276.
Osbern (a kinsman of Thomas Becket), 15.
Osborn, J. Lee, 205n.
Otford, legends of, 203.
*Otinel*, 277.
Ox revived, 180.
Ozanam, A. F., 215n, 282.

P

Page, J. L. W., 147n, 150n, 151.
"Palace, Thomas à Becket's," 204–5.
Palgrave, Sir Francis, 282.
Paralysis, cures of, 156, 159, 166–67, 169, 188; inflicted, 161.
Paris, University of, 15.
Paris, Gaston, 52n, 54n, 60n.
Paris, Matthew, 66, 143, 174n; *Chronica Majora*, 11, 12, 118n, 119n, 125n, 135n, 136n, 197, 278; *Historia Anglorum*, 278; *Historia Minor*, 139n, 141n, 143n.
Parker, Matthew, Archbishop of Canterbury, 250.
Partial cures, 161, 191.
"Path, Becket's," 206.
Paul, St., 20.
Paul, Hermann, 237n.
Paul III, Pope, 238, 243, 244, 252.
Pauli, R., 286.
Pavy, L. A., 282.
Pegge, Samuel, 207.
Pennant, Thomas, 39.
*Perfect Legendary*, The, 82.
Perils at Sea, deliverance from, 160, 173–74.
Persons, Robert, 240, 242.
Peter, St., 110; parallel to his defense of Jesus, 121, 136; parallel to his deliverance from prison, 173.
Petin, L'Abbe, 39n, 41n.
Pez, Bernard, 95n.
Phials, lead and tin, replace wooden pyxes, 190; miracles connected with, 182, 190; punishment for stealing, 163.
*Philadelphia Public Ledger*, 43n.
Philip, son of King John, 235.
Philip, son of Louis VII, 177.
*Piers Plowman*, 19n, 22.
Pig restored to life, 180–81; preserved from drowning, 181.
Pilgrimage to Canterbury, 165, 173, 186, 191, 194; as a means of cure, 179, 186; vow of pilgrimage efficacious, 161, 186, 190–91; punishment for failure to perform vow of pilgrimage, 161; punishment for delaying pilgrimage, 162; punishment for deriding the pilgrimage, 161.
Pisa, explanation of the Leaning Tower of, 233.
Poitiers, Battle of, 235, 236.
Poitiers, Bishop of, 18.
Pole, Reginald, English cardinal, 245.
Police, in *Florent et Octavian*, 61, 276.
*Polistoire*, 12, 201.
Pollini, Girolamo, 240, 242.
Polwhele, R., 104n.
Pond, Becket's, at Bramfield, 206.
Pont, Timothy, 152–3.
Pontigny, vision at, 99–101.
Pope, the (Alexander III, q. v.), 16–8, 99–100, 102, 126, 128, 142; miracles of Becket before, 87–9; martyrdom of Becket miraculously revealed to, 128–29.
Possession by demons, *see* Demoniacs, healing of.
Potthast, August, 286.
Prayer, healing as direct answer to, 190; prayer for return of illness granted, 191; praying toward Canterbury, 190; prayer for St. Thomas rewarded, 165; prayer to St. Thomas unexpectedly rewarded, 178; invocation of

another brings healing, 190–91; invocation of St. Thomas saves men in ordeal, 175.
Preservation of life, miraculous, after hanging, 175; in other extreme situations, 175–76.
Princess, Saracen, *see* Saracen Princess.
Prison, releases from, 160, 173, 175.
*Prise de Cordres et de Sebille*, 56, 275.
*Prise d'Orange*, 57, 71, 276.
Proctor and Wordsworth, 202n.
Prophecies, (*see* also Visions, Prophetic) beginning of miracles prophesied, 196; political prophecies, 196, 225–37; death foretold, 197; Prophecy of the Lily, the Lion, and the Son of Man, 229–32.
Punishment, miracles of, *see* Miracles of St. Thomas.
Pynson, Richard, 37, 88, 282.
Pyxes, miracles with, 190; replaced by lead and tin phials, 190.

Q

*Quadrilogus*, 9, 82n, 98, 99n, 103n, 104n, 106n, 152n; the two editions of, 11; the Early *Quadrilogus*, 11, 278; the Later *Quadrilogus*, 11, 28–34, 37, 41–3, 50, 67, 115, 278.

R

Radford, L. B., 8n, 9, 10n, 13, 14n, 15n, 282.
Ralph, a nephew of Thomas Becket, 222.
Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, 119n, 279.
Ralph of London, 81.
Ramsay, J. H., 121n, 138n.
Ranking, B. Montgomery, 68.
*Raoul de Cambrai*, 276.
Read, William George, 282.
"Regale of France," 182.
Reginald, *Vita S. Godrici*, 129n.
*Reinbrun*, 276.
Reinfrit of Brunswick, 65n.
Relics, lost and miraculously found, 177; miracles wrought through, 184, 191; pretended relic efficacious, 184; supposed relics of St. Thomas, 208, 223–24.
Remigius, St., 194.
Renet, M., 210, 211, 214n, 215n, 282.
Retzlaff, Otto, 284.
Revivification, miracles of, *see* Death, restoration from.
Reward, miracles of, *see* Miracles of St. Thomas.
Rhode, Max, 56n.
Ribadeneira, Pedro, 37, 38n, 119n, 243, 283.
Richard, servant of Gilbert Becket, 29–36, 41–2, 44–5, 47–8, 53, 65.
Richard I (Coeur de Lion), 7, 20, 66, 72, 174.
Richard II, king of England, 192, 228.
*Richard Coer de Lyon*, 69.
Richard of Chichester, St., 205, 251.
Richard de Luci, 86.
Richard, C., 39n, 41n.
Richers de L'Aigle, 79.
Rickert, Edith, 62n.
Risdon, Tristram, 145, 151.
Rivadeneira, *see* Ribadeneira.
"Ro: Ba:" 250.
Robert, Abbe, 42, 43n.
Robert, Duke of Normandy, 40, 45.
Robert, prior, 15.
Robert, Jean François, 282.
Robert of Avesbury, 226n.
Robert of Cricklade, lost life of Becket, 11, 81, 158.
Robert of Gloucester, chronicle attributed to, 12, 279; life of Becket wrongly attributed to, 73n.
Robert of Merton, 117, 155.
Robert of Swapham, 122n.
Robert, J. F., 143n.
Robertson, James Craigie, 8n, 9, 14n, 28n, 112, 122n, 154n, 222n, 278, 286.
Robertson, J. G., 85n, 105n.
Robin Hood, 7.
Robinson, W. A. S., 19n, 286.
Roesa, mother of Thomas Becket, (*see* also Matilda), 15, 59.
Roger, Archbishop of York, 170.
Roger of Croyland, 11.
Roger of Pontigny, 9.
Roger of Wendover, 12n, 278.
Roland, 54, 55.
*Roland, Chanson de*, 275.
Rome, Thomas Becket goes to, 15; legend of his later visit to, 220.
Romold, Church of St., 146.
Roper, William, 250.
Rosamund, in *Elie de Saint Gille*, 59.
Roscarrick, Nicolas, 12.

Rouen, home for a time of Gilbert Becket, 15; tradition that he was born at, 211.
Round, J. H., 208, 286.
Rudder's *Gloucestershire*, 152n.
Rymenhild, 59.

S

St. Lô, Becket's supposed visit to, 212.
St. Paul's Cathedral, 31, 33, 35, 58; fourteenth century ceremony at, 21.
Salatrie, in *Ciperis de Vignevaux*, 63.
Salisbury, bishop of, 113.
Salomon, 225.
Saltwood Castle, 116, 140.
Sander, Nicolas, 239–40, 242.
Santa Maria Maggiore, church of, 122.
Saracen commanded to be baptized, 197.
Saracen Princess, Legend of the, 28–74, 257–58; sources of the legend, 28–9; a comparison of versions, 28–50; parallels to the legend, 51–65, 275–76; origin of the legend, 65–74; legend as given in Bodleian MS. 14716, 262–68; legend as given in Grandison's Life of St. Thomas, 269–70; legend as given in the anonymous English translation of the *Legenda Aurea*, 271–73; motifs in the legend, 274–75.
Sarum Missal, 202.
Schaff, Philip, 282.
Schassek, 201.
Schelling, Felix E., 7n.
Scotland, reception of the murderers in Scotland, 141; legend concerning Morville's flight into, 152–53.
Scott, Sir Walter, 40n.
Schütz, O., 282.
Sea, deliverances from dangers at, 173; calmed for Prince Henry, 178.
Sebastian, Thomas compared to the Martyr, 82.
Seneca the Rhetorician, 52, 70, 275.
Sens, Archbishop of, 123n, 126; Becket at, 17; Vision at, 226–27, 231.
Sepulchre, Church of the Holy, 144, 146.
Sereyne, 63, 276.
Sergeant, Lewis, 244n, 251n.
Seymour, Robert, 38n.
Shoe Buckle, Becket's, 208.
Shipwreck, people saved from, 174.
Sicily, Becket honored in, 21.
*Siège de Barbastre, Le*, 56, 275.
Silver Thread, vowing of, 187.
Sinamonde, 63.
Singer, S., 53n.
Sleidanus, Johannes, 245–46.
Somersetshire tradition of the fate of the murderers, 142, 144–45, 146.
Somner, William, 19n, 20n, 23, 122n.
*South English Legendary*, 12, 32–4, 50, 65, 98n, 100, 121n, 126n, 130n, 147, 262–68, 275, 279.
Southey, Robert, 127n, 282.
Southworth, John, 256.
Spain, popularity of St. Thomas in, 21.
Spelman, Sir Henry, 14n, 20n, 152.
Stanley, Arthur Penrhyn, Dean, 12n, 22n, 98n, 115, 117n, 119–24, 138, 141n, 144, 146n, 147n, 148n, 151–52, 158n, 192n, 193, 201n, 202n, 207n, 212n, 241n, 258, 283.
Stapleton, Thomas, *Tres Thomae*, 158, 246, 283.
Starling saved by invocation of St. Thomas, 179.
Stephanides, Wil., 283.
Stephen, protomartyr, 131.
Stevenson, Joseph, 119n, 233n, 235n, 279.
Stewart, E. M., 27n, 283.
Stone, John, *Chronicle*, 174n.
Storm, averts danger from the Cathedral, 196; 173–74.
Stow, John, 246; *Annales*, 220n, 247, 254; *Chronicle*, 246; Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles, 246.
Stratford, John, 120.
Stratford-on-Avon, painting at, 120.
Stroud, legend of, 203–4.
Strutt, Joseph, 119.
Sudbury, Archbishop, 22.
Suggestion, power of, in miracles, 179.
Susie Pye, 47, 65, 72; ballad of, 47.
Sussex, traditions of, 204–5.
Swords' Point, Altar of the, 118.

T

Tanner, *Notitia*, 207n.
Tapin, L., 214–15, 286.

Tarring, tradition of, 205.
Taylor, Marion Lee, 26n, 27.
Taylor, Rupert, 233, 235–37.
Tempests, miraculous stilling of, 160, 173–74; preservation of life in tempest, 196.
Templars, Church of the, 144n.
Tennyson, Alfred, *Becket*, 13, 76n, 121n.
Tetzel of Nuremberg, 201–2.
Thaun, William, 148n.
*Theatre of Honour*, 66.
Theft, miraculously detected, 166; miraculously punished, 163.
Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, 15, 81, 177.
Theodore, cardinal, 147n.
*Thesaurus Novus Anecdoturum*, 192.
Thiemke, H., 12n, 32, 33n, 121n, 126n, 130n, 147n, 279.
Thierceville, Gilbert Becket born at, 14, 211.
Thierry, Augustin, 13, 26, 40, 42n.
Thomas, St., Becket as, 154–200; first called Saint, 154–55; fame of, 18–23; consecrates a church after his death, 194; enrolled among the saints of Cambrai and Artois, 210; fails to punish transgression, 164–65; tells suppliant to go elsewhere for healing, 194; why he heeds vows and accepts money, 187; abbey dedicated to, 144–45; altars dedicated to, 18, 178, 217, 219; chapels dedicated to, 67, 178, 188; proposed chapel to, 181; churches dedicated to, 22, 151, 208–9; Cult of, 18–19, 22; Fountain of (at Arras), 217; a hospital built in honor of, 196; Jubilee of, 20, 22–23; shrine of, 19, 21n, 23, 165, 183; offerings at the shrine of, 18–19; tomb of, 164, 169, 182–83; Henry II's penance at the tomb of, 135; translation of, 20; St. Thomas' Day, 102, 162; St. Thomas' Church, *see* Christ Church, Canterbury; father of (*see* Becket, Gilbert), 196; mother of (*see* Matilda), 72; legends of, 154–200; miracles of (*see* Miracles), 154–200; relics of (*see* Relics); visions of (*see* Visions), 193–200. *See also* Becket, Thomas; Thomas Acrensis, St.; Traditions; Legend Prophecies; and Haircloth Garments.
Thomas, St., Apostle, 18, 68, 195.
Thomas Acrensis, St., Chapel or Church of, 21, 47; Order of, 20, 66; Hospital of, 30, 39, 66–67.
Thomas de Burton, 114n.
Thomas de Canteloup, St., 220, 224.
Thomas of Aldon, 22.
Thomas of Ashedoune, 225.
Thomas of Cantimpré, 92, 95–96.
Thomas, William, 201, 249, 256.
*Thomas Saga Erkibyskups*, 22n, 75n, 76n, 88, 97, 98n, 100–2, 114n, 115n, 116, 117n, 129n, 155n, 165n, 171n, 173n, 175n, 178n, 179n, 182n, 185n, 194n, 196n, 198n, 203n, 255n, 278; description and sources, 10–11; legends in the, 77, 79–82, 85–86, 99n, 103n, 104n, 106–7, 118n, 119, 122–25, 126n, 127, 132n, 190n, 199; number of miracles in the, 158–59.
Thompson, Robert Anchor, 283.
Thornbury, George Walter, 67.
Thorpe, William, 22.
Thule, a legend of, 192.
Todd, H. J., 243, 244n.
Tooly, John, 252.
Torello, Messer, 65n.
Toulouse War of 1159, 15–16.
Touques, a legend of, 213.
Tournai, legends of, 218–29.
Tours, Council of, 9.
Tout, Thomas Frederick, 284.
Tracy, William de, 17, 115, 140; later life, 138; legends about, 145; legend that he struck the first blow at the Archbishop, 119, 121, 146, 177, 258; legends of fate, 142, 146–153.
Tracy, William (a Gloucestershire-squire), 252.
Tracy, Sir William (rector of Morte), 150–51.
Tradition, popular, as a source of the legend of Becket, 13. *See also* Legend.
Traditions, local, 201–24.
*Travels of John Mandeville*, The, 192.
Triple Alliance of 1668, 232.
Troyes, Treaty of, 231.
Tully, T., 231–32.
Tumor healed, 163.

Twysden, Roger, *Scriptores Decem*, 12n, 28n, 139n, 278.

U

Underhill, Evelyn, 286.

V

*Valentin and Orson*, 63, 276.
Val Richer, legend of, 214–15.
Van Drival, M., 158n.
Vavasseur, G. le, 286.
Vellacott, C. H., 69n, 286.
Vergil, Polydore, 203–4.
Vignay, Jean de, 279.
Villegas, Alfonso, 37–38, 139n, 283.
Vincent, St., 131.
Vincentius Bellovacensis, 95n.
Visions, of Becket during his lifetime, 99–105; of other people about Becket, 105–7; Vision at Pontigny, 99–102; martyrdom announced through visions, 129–30; visions reveal the honor paid to Becket in heaven, 129–33; visions in which St. Thomas appeared, 129–32, 134–35, 169, 174, 185, 193–99; healing through visions (miraculous visions), 169–70, 184–85; 193–94; visions of command, 193–96, 198; visions of warning, 105, 193, 197–98; prophetic visions, 99–107, 131-33, 193, 196–97, 225–29; visions of encouragement, 193, 198–99; imitative visions, 193, 199; allegorical visions, 99, 102–7, 193, 199; Vision at Sens, 226–27.
Von Sybel, 53n.
Voragine, Jacobus de (*see* Golden Legend), 12, 94n, 95n, 112n, 279.
Vows to St. Thomas, as a means of procuring healing, 161, 186, 190–91; failure to perform vow punished, 161.
*Voyage de Charlemagne, Le*, 54, 275.

W

Wade, Laurentius, 36, 75n, 78n, 96, 100n, 130n, 139n, 140n, 141n, 279.
Wade's Mill, tradition of, 206.
Walberg, E., 8–10, 79n, 90n, 100, 133n, 156n, 188n, 278, 284–85.
Walford, Edward, 67n.
Wall, J. Charles, 20n, 286.
Ward, Mrs., *Biographical Sketch of St. Thomas*, 283.
Watney, John, 66n, 287.
Wallace, Wilfrid, 199n.
Walsingham, Thomas, *Historia Anglicana*, 227–28, 237n.
Ward, Bernard, 184n, 192n.
Ward, H. L. D., *Catalogue of Romances*, 79n, 95n, 229n, 231n.
Ward, H. Snowden, 22n.
Warner, G. F., 192n, 226n, 253n, 254.
Warner, S. A., 122n.
Warren, F. M., 52.
Wars of the Roses, 21n.
Warter, John Wood, 205n.
Water of St. Thomas, the, Origin of the custom of diluting the blood, 156, 188; miracles wrought with, 168–69, 188–90; miraculously multiplied and diminished, 189–90; miraculously changed into milk or blood, 202; Canterbury Water, 164, 166, 206; may have contained drugs, 179; miracles with the Canterbury Water, 173, 182, 189–90; spurious Canterbury Water efficacious, 189.
Water in which relics had been washed, used in miracles, 184.
Watney, John, 14n, 40n, 42n, 66, 174n.
Waxen models used to effect a cure or recover lost articles, 180, 187–88.
Weather, fair, attributed to favor of St. Thomas, 178.
Webb, John, 227n.
Weever, John, 20n, 228.
Welch, Charles, 21n.
Well, Becket's, at Otford, 203.
Well, St. Thomas', at Canterbury, 127, 190n, 201–03.
Well, St. Thomas', at Northampton, 206.
Wells, J. E., 133n, 233n, 287.
Welsh War of 1157, 15.
Wendover, Roger de, 141n.
Westcote, Thomas, 25, 26n.
*Western Antiquary*, 148n, 151n.
Westminster, Council at, 16.
West Tarring, legends of, 204–6.
Wharton, Henry, *Anglia Sacra*, 12.
Wheeler, Clifford, 20n.
Whitington, Richard, 21n.
Widow's Meal and Oil, miracle of, paralleles, 176.
Wightwick, George, 121n.

Wilkins, David, *Concilia*, 238n, 239n, 240, 242.
Wilks, Theodore C., 43.
Wilks, Washington and Mark, 283.
William, Bishop, 21.
William, chaplain of Ralph de Diceto, 66.
William the Conqueror, 21, 25, 115.
William the Good, king of Sicily, 21.
William, king of the Scots, 135.
William, lord of Liskeard, 25.
William, nephew of Archbishop Theobald, 177.
William, servant of Gilbert Becket, 36.
William of Canterbury, 10–11, 14n, 17n, 82–3, 89n, 98, 100, 105, 110, 112–13, 115n, 116, 118, 121, 125n, 133, 139n, 140n, 152, 164, 167n, 168–72, 175, 177, 191, 202, 204n, 211; *Miracles*, 10, 112, 157–59; Biography, 10.
William of Eynesford, 16.
William of Newburgh, 142.
William of Orange, 55, 57, 68.
William of Sens, 120, 157n.
Wilson, Claudine I., 285.
Winchester, Bishop of, 33, 138.
Princess, 45–6, 49.
Winter, C. T., 100n, 126n.
Wolf, Christian, 11.
Woodward, B. B., 43.
Woodspring Priory, legend of, 144–45, 208.
Woolacombe, legend of, 148.
Worde, Wynkyn de, 12, 37n.
Wordsworth, Christopher, 250.
Workman, H. B., 243, 244n, 251n.
Wren, Percival Christopher, 49.
Wright, Thomas, 40n, 118n.
Wriothesley, *Chronicle*, 247.
Wyatt, Thomas, 245.
Wycliffe, John, 192n, 243, 251.

Y

Yonge, Charlotte, 73n.
York, Archbishop of, 17, 113.
Yorkists, 21n.
Yorkshire, tradition of, 141.
*Young Bekie* ballad, 64.
*Ysaie le Triste*, 64, 276.
Ysope, a name of the Saracen Princess, 34.

Z

Zamora, Gil de, 95n.
Zuleika, a name of the Saracen

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